

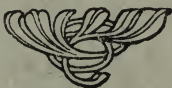
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no.35

E.P.C. Welsh Drama Series, No. 35

The
Arrogance of Power

A DRAMA OF 1925

NAUNTON DAVIES



CARDIFF :
THE EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING CO., LTD.

1920



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THE
ARROGANCE OF POWER

A Drama of 1925

By
NAUNTON DAVIES



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PERSONS REPRESENTED:

ROWLAND ROBERTS	-	On the Revolutionary
The Unseen Hand		Committee.
JOHN ROBERTS	- -	President of the Revo-
His father		lutionary Com-
		mittee.
PRICHARD REES	- -	Commander of the
		Black Guard, on
		the Revolutionary
		Committee.
SIR CHARLES LLOYD	-	A Royalist, late of
of Manor Glyn		the — Lancers.
LILIAN LLOYD	- -	His Sister.
EDMUNDS	- - -	An old Lancer. But-
		ler at Manor Glyn.
TOM JAMES	} - -	{ Two friends. Mem-
SAM WATKINS		
		bers of the Black
		Guard.

The Scene of the Play is set in Glamorganshire, in the neighbourhood of Manor Glyn, a fictitious name for obvious reasons.

The Arrogance of Power.

ACT I.

SCENE 1.

[An oak panelled room in Manor Glyn. The walls are hung with family paintings and stags' heads, other trophies of the chase, and ancient implements of battle. There are two doors, one on the left and one on the right, and at the back of the room, by the side of a large window, looking on to a lawn and trees, there is a grandfather's clock, black with age and of unusual size. On the left there is an inglenook, with a black oak settle on either side, and on the right a sideboard, with decanters, fruit, glasses, and silver flower vases; and here and there oak chairs, two small tables, and a large safe built into the wall, where it is visible from the front. As the curtain rises, SIR CHARLES LLOYD, a man with bronzed, handsome face, thoughtful eyes, and the well-knit, active figure of a typical cavalry officer, head of the LLOYDS of Manor Glyn,

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about 35 or so, is seen studying a paper, which he holds in his hand as he paces up and down the room in deep, anxious thought. Rings bell. Renews his walk.

EDMUNDS, *the butler, grown old in the service of the Lloyds—he is well over 80—enters, R.]*

SIR CHARLES (*pausing in his walk*): Any fresh news, Edmunds?

EDMUNDS: Yes, Sir Charles, there is plenty of news, bad news, too. They are hanging people everywhere. Will the shoemaker is the last, because he put his fingers to his nose behind the President's back, they say, and some slut of a spy saw him; and there was poor Will (*jerks his thumb upwards*) confiscated in the interests of the State. That's what they say, Sir Charles, when they rob a man of his life or his money. Others say it was because he mended boots for the gentry. Indeed, Sir Charles, it isn't safe to sneeze. Snuff will be more dangerous than gunpowder soon, if they go on like this.

SIR CHARLES: I am sorry to hear about poor Will. He was one of the most harmless fellows I ever knew—barring his poaching.

EDMUNDS: Yes, indeed, poor fellow, he won't track any more hares over the snow. But there, there is no snow to tempt him where he is gone.

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He was a good workman, too. He will make satin shoes for the angels rather than be idle.

SIR CHARLES : Did you hear any other news ?

EDMUNDS : Well, the place is full of wild talk. David, the postman, says the Revolutionaries are spreading the report that the gentry are secretly arming and going to rise against the Republic.

SIR CHARLES : They would say it whether it was true or not, as an excuse for robbery and murder.

EDMUNDS : That is just what David said: and he is a pretty knowing one. Indeed, if half the talk is true, there isn't much good in the other half.

SIR CHARLES (*renews his walk—thinking aloud,*) Things are going from bad to worse. It is time to strike, and strike hard, if the country is to be saved from utter ruin.

EDMUNDS : Indeed, Sir Charles, I think the Revolutionaries are drunk, the way they are going on—like Betty Lucas's old sow, when she has had too much grains. But I am forgetting. David, the postman, told me to say that he was stopped on his way to Manor Glyn, and forced to give up the Manor postbag.

SIR CHARLES (*disturbed*) : Did they carry off the letters ?

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EDMUNDS : They did, Sir Charles—everything that was in the bag.

(SIR CHARLES angrily crushes the paper he is holding in his hand, sets his teeth, and mutters to himself.)

LILIAN LLOYD enters hastily, R., an empty leather post-bag in her hand. She is a sweet-faced, graceful girl of 23 or so, and moves with the supple ease of a beautifully-formed woman. In repose, her expression is thoughtful, and suggests refined, womanly qualities, strength, and intelligence.)

LILIAN (concerned) : Our letters have been stolen ! (Shows empty bag.) The post-bag has been broken open.

SIR CHARLES : You can go, Edmunds. (Exit EDMUNDS, R.) It's very unfortunate, Lilian. I expected an important despatch from Colonel Cradoc, and he's not always discreet.

LILIAN : Why will you run such risks ? Our liberty, our lives may depend upon what's written in a letter.

SIR CHARLES : I know. But up to now, they have respected the privacy of my post-bag. Cradoc is a good soldier.

LILIAN : And a very rash man.

SIR CHARLES : He despises the Revolutionaries and despises precautions. I have often told him his want of caution will get us into trouble. He

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fancies himself at the head of the old regiment, putting down raids in the East, and forgets that he's a marked man. (*A pause.*)

LILIAN: Didn't you expect a draft from the bank to-day?

SIR CHARLES: By Jove! that's what they were after. But how would they have known about it?

LILIAN: Through their spies. They are everywhere! (*Sits down with a sigh.*)

(*Front door bell rings.*)

SIR CHARLES: Do you expect anyone?

LILIAN: Oh, no. There are no visitors now, only official inquisitors. I shiver every time the bell rings.

SIR CHARLES (*glances quickly at the paper in his hand*): I think I'll put this in a place of safety (*moving towards the safe*).

LILIAN: What is it?

SIR CHARLES: A list of the men who have joined the movement against the Government.

LILIAN: Oh, take care of it, Charles. If it fell into the President's hands, think of the awful consequences!

SIR CHARLES: It would puzzle him to make anything of it—unless he could find the key. It's in cipher, and the key (*points to safe*) is in there.

(*As SIR CHARLES is about to place the document in the safe* PRICHARD REES enters, L., and darts

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a keen, inquisitive glance at the document and open safe. PRICHARD REES is a man of medium height, spare figure, features of the hatchet-faced type, and dark, keen eyes, which seldom look straight at you. About 45, he is dressed in a plain, dark-lounge suit, with a red tie instead of a collar, a red sash over his right shoulder, and a sword at his side.)

PRICHARD REES (*comes in with a laugh*) : Hullo ! (SIR CHARLES *thrusts the paper into the safe quickly—locks the safe.*) A state secret, or a new version of the Conspirators' Chorus—what ?

LILIAN : Good morning, Mr. Rees, or—should I say ?—Citizen Commander of the Black Guards ?

PRICHARD REES (*chuckling*) : So you've heard of my appointment. Good move, don't you think ? Saves my property, my neck included ! If you were wise, Lloyd, you'd follow my example.

SIR CHARLES : I'd see them — — !

LILIAN (*holds up her hand warningly*) : Charles ! (*Sweetly to PRICHARD REES.*) I'm sure Mr. Rees is not interested in your private opinions.

PRICHARD REES : Oh, but I am. Nothing would please me better than to hear the whole caravan of Revolutionaries cursed until the air grew hot enough to burn them off the face of the earth.

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SIR CHARLES : Rather inconsistent, isn't it, with your official duties ? It's dangerous to play fast and loose with the Masters of the Moment—the Lords of Destiny.

PRICHARD REES : I daresay it is ; but I like this excitement. Besides, I am in a position of power, and able to put a spoke in the wheel of the State coach, when it's driven too fast and furious. Don't you see, Lloyd, how important it is to have a watch dog at headquarters—ostensibly a comrade of President John Roberts, but secretly a friend of those (*lowers his voice—meaningly*) who would destroy him ?

SIR CHARLES : It may be as you say, but, for my part, I don't like such subtle methods.

PRICHARD REES (*smiling*) : You wait a bit. What do you say, Miss Lloyd ? May I hope that my view appeals to you ?

LILIAN : I think you run a dreadful risk.

PRICHARD REES : Oh, I don't mind the risk, if (*with an admiring glance at her*) I can stand between you and danger.

LILIAN : Thank you—I can depend upon my brother to do that.

SIR CHARLES (*who has noticed PRICHARD REES's admiring glance*) : Is there any price attached to your services, Rees ?

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PRICHARD REES : My dear Lloyd, of course not. I do it (*again looks at LILIAN*) for love, not for pay.

(*LILIAN walks away, gazes thoughtfully out of the window.*)

SIR CHARLES : Your answer may be taken in two ways. If there is anything personal in it (*with a significant gesture towards LILIAN*) there are reasons which compel me to warn you to (*pauses—adds decisively*) drop it.

PRICHARD REES (*with a laugh*) : Of course ! It's much easier to drop a thing than to hold it against long odds. I always take the easiest way. I never ask for trouble nor a "thank you" until I've earned it.

SIR CHARLES : There are some things one can never earn. So long as we understand each other, it's all right. Tell me, who are the members of the Revolutionary Council at present ? They change so often, I don't know.

PRICHARD REES : Oh, the Council's for show, and don't count. You mean the Executive Committee ? (*SIR CHARLES nods.*) John Roberts, Rowland Roberts, and myself.

SIR CHARLES : And you three men have unrestrained power over the lives and property of every soul in the county ! (*A pause.*) John

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Roberts will drag you down to hell before he's done with you.

PRICHARD REES : I'll make it hot for him if he does.

SIR CHARLES : Are you the devil, then, who stirs up the fire ?

(LILIAN *turns towards the speakers, and listens attentively.*)

PRICHARD REES (*laughs*) : If you ask me, I should say his son is. Rowland is much more likely to drag *you* down to the nether regions. His father ? Bah ! His methods are those of a furious bull. He bellows before he makes his rush, and you know where you are. But Rowland is as subtle and silent as a fox, and just about as human.

LILIAN (*coming forward*) : It never struck me that he was that kind of man. You were at Cambridge with him, weren't you, Charles ?

SIR CHARLES : Yes—I saw a good deal of Rowland in those days, and, must say, I liked him, in spite of his father. No, Rees, I fancy you are prejudiced.

PRICHARD REES : All right. But he countenances the violent methods of his father ? You can't deny that.

SIR CHARLES : Well ?

PRICHARD REES : Then he's responsible, that's all.

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LILIAN : If he is responsible, don't you think you are, too ?

PRICHARD REES : I see he is in high favour. He is fortunate in having such a fair champion. But you'll live to find out your mistake and regret your simple faith.

LILIAN : You are mistaken, Mr. Rees, if you think I could champion anyone associated with your Government.

PRICHARD REES (*with a laugh*) : A declared enemy is better than a likewarm friend.

LILIAN : I wonder which you are ?

PRICHARD REES : I am neither, thank you.

SIR CHARLES (*thoughtfully*) : I've seen him hanging about the grounds more than once lately, and he's avoided me. Can it be possible that he's the man who has been spying upon us ? I don't like to think it ; but men have strangely changed since the Revolution.

LILIAN : It is utterly impossible, Charles. I'm sure he couldn't do a thing like that.

PRICHARD REES : There's another explanation, Miss Lloyd. He's an old admirer of yours, and may hang around in the hope of seeing you, as he dare not be seen coming to the house.

LILIAN (*annoyed*) : You are unpleasantly personal, Mr. Rees.

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PRICHARD REES : I beg your pardon. In that case, we must put a less favourable construction upon his presence in your grounds.

LILIAN : Do you accuse him of spying—of watching in the grounds—to denounce us to the Government ? It is a serious matter, and you had better speak out plainly, and not insinuate things you cannot prove.

PRICHARD REES : I only know it's his nature to do that kind of thing. His university education has sharpened his wits and put a cloak of plausibility over his shady methods. Mind, I don't wish to harm him ; but I should be a false friend to you if, knowing what I do, I held my tongue. To be quite candid, he's the kind of fellow who'll speak you fair, while luring you up to the brink of a precipice to push you over. And you'll never suspect him.

LILIAN (*distressed*) : I can't believe it.

PRICHARD REES (*with affected regret*) : I am sorry. You compel me to produce evidence. Here it is (*hands a bundle of letters to SIR CHARLES*).

SIR CHARLES (*glancing at letters*) : Why, these are the letters stolen from my post-bag.

PRICHARD REES : I found them in Rowland Roberts's desk. Do you want any further proof of his honourable methods, Miss Lloyd ?

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LILIAN (*moves away—in a low distressed voice*) :
No. (*A pause.*)

SIR CHARLES : There was, I believe, a banker's draft for £2000 amongst my letters, Rees. I do not see it here.

PRICHARD REES (*with a dry laugh*) : You are not likely to see it, if Citizen Rowland put his hands on it. Confiscated in the interests of the State ! That's the formula for these robberies. (*Follows LILIAN.*) I hope you will forgive me, Miss Lloyd. I know I have been a bit of a brute. But what else could I do ?

LILIAN : I don't blame you—I—I thank you. But it has been very painful to be told such things about a—an old friend.

PRICHARD REES : And deuced hard for me. If the President knew what I'd done he'd have me shot. But I don't care. I'd do it again to save you from trouble.

(*The measured tramp of men is heard off, L.*)

LILIAN (*turns quickly towards the door—in a listening attitude*) : What's that ? I didn't hear the bell ring.

PRICHARD REES : It sounds like some of my fellows. (*With a laugh.*) They wouldn't ring ; it isn't etiquette in these enlightened days.

(*Door, L., is pushed open, and ROWLAND ROBERTS stands for a moment framed in the doorway,*

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his eyes quickly travelling over those in the room, and finally resting on LILIAN. He is a well-set-up man, of prepossessing appearance, with a strong, intellectual face and an air of distinction, out of keeping with his plain clothes, red tie, and red sash. He is about 30 and wears a sword. He takes two steps into the room, halts, and says in a loud voice : " In the name of the Committee.)

PRICHARD REES (*in a low voice to Sir Charles*) : This is confoundedly awkward for me. Don't give me away.

SIR CHARLES : It's confoundedly insolent to enter a man's house without permission.

LILIAN : Hush, Charles. Let us hear what Mr. Roberts has to say.

(*ROWLAND advances slowly into the room. TOM JAMES and SAM WATKINS, two members of the Black Guard, stand at the door. TOM JAMES is dressed like a collier, and SAM WATKINS like a railway porter. Both have red rosettes on the right arm, and carry rifles, with a sword bayonet in a black belt. They are a curious pair to look at, and about the same age as ROWLAND. TOM has round shoulders and a twisted body, and would look "dull" but for his bright, quick eyes. SAM has a sandy moustache, pale blue eyes, and a habit of wagging his head and quietly chuckling without apparent cause.*)

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ROWLAND (*to* SIR CHARLES) : I have been sent here by order of the Revolutionary Committee to request your presence at the Council Chamber.

SIR CHARLES : Your Committee has chosen a suitable messenger. May I ask why I am singled out for this special attention ?

ROWLAND : Certain accusations have been made against you, and the Revolutionary Committee wishes to give you an opportunity of answering them.

SIR CHARLES (*sarcastically*) : Accusations arising out of the theft of my letters and the construction put upon them by you, I suppose ?

ROWLAND (*looks surprised*) : You are mistaken. I know nothing about the theft of your letters. It is the first I have heard of it.

SIR CHARLES : Indeed ? Then, perhaps you will be good enough to tell me of what I am accused and who is my accuser ?

ROWLAND : Citizen Rees—you were sent here to explain the position. Haven't you done so ?

PRICHARD REES (*embarrassed*) : I have only just arrived. I didn't understand there was any urgency.

ROWLAND : The President's orders are always urgent. (*To* SIR CHARLES.) Citizen Rees is better acquainted with the details of this affair than I am.

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If he hasn't made the necessary explanations, I can't do so without betraying an agent of the Republic. (*Looks hard at PRICHARD REES, who wriggles uneasily.*)

LILIAN (*with a contemptuous glance at ROWLAND*): An agent who betrays his friends would naturally shun betrayal himself.

PRICHARD REES (*hastily*): But Citizen Rowland is right. To betray the agents of the Government would be a sure way of losing their services.

ROWLAND: I'm not sure that that would be a disadvantage in some cases. A spy is as little to be trusted by those he serves as by those he pretends to serve.

SIR CHARLES (*stiffly*): Your ethical reflections are a little at variance with your practice, I'm afraid, judging by present circumstances.

ROWLAND: Pardon me, you are not in a position to judge. Your suspicions are based upon suppositions which don't exist. To judge men hastily may be more unforgiveable than the treachery you imagine them capable of.

SIR CHARLES (*sharply*): I judge by what I see, not, God knows, by what I wish to see.

ROWLAND: We all do, I hope. But we all make mistakes. (*A pause.*) Many things are forced upon us which we bear as well as we may—not from choice.

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PRICHARD REES (*aside to LILIAN*): Could deceit go further?

LILIAN (*with a sigh*): It is pitiful!

ROWLAND: When you are ready, Sir Charles—

SIR CHARLES: I don't know that I shall obey the President's orders. I don't recognise the authority of your Committee.

PRICHARD REES (*aside to LILIAN*): Persuade him to go. It's dangerous to refuse.

LILIAN: Go, Charles—go! You have nothing to fear.

SIR CHARLES (*to ROWLAND*): I suppose something unpleasant will happen, if I refuse?

ROWLAND: It would be useless to refuse. The President's will is inflexible, his justice impartial.

PRICHARD REES (*with a chuckle*): True, Citizen Rowland. I believe he'll hang you some day to show his love of impartial justice.

SIR CHARLES: Very well; since I am compelled to go, I must go. (*Rings bell.*) Take care of my keys, Lilian (*hands keys to LILLIAN*). They will be safer with you than with me.

(EDMUNDS *comes in, R.*)

SIR CHARLES: Bring my hat and coat, Edmunds. (*To ROWLAND.*) I suppose I shall be permitted to return to-night?

ROWLAND: It will depend upon the course the inquiry takes.

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SIR CHARLES : Ah, I see. Bring my dressing case as well, Edmunds, and put any things in you think I may want for the night.

EDMUNDS : Yes, Sir Charles. (*Going—turns by the door.*) Shall I accompany you, Sir Charles ?

SIR CHARLES : No—I can look after myself, and you'll be of more use here.

EDMUNDS : There's no knowing, Sir Charles. I can still handle a revolver—at a pinch. An old Lancer, sir, might be a sort of moral support.

SIR CHARLES : Thank you, old friend. I'm in no danger. If I am, I'll be sure to send for you.

EDMUNDS : Thank you, sir. I'll be ready night or day.

(EDMUNDS *shambles out, R., with a look of defiance at ROWLAND and his guard.*)

SIR CHARLES (*reflectively to ROWLAND*) : It's a curiously ironical position, I must say. My post-bag is forced open, my letters and money are stolen, and the thieves set themselves up as my judges. This is what comes of the pure rule of anarchy. If anyone had told me, when we three were at Cambridge together, that anything so tragically farcical could happen in Wales, and that any Welshmen out of a lunatic asylum could be found to take part in such a brutal business, I should have laughed in his face—or knocked him down.

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ROWLAND : I am afraid you are too prejudiced against me to be influenced by anything I can say. In those days you and I were not so far apart in our outlook upon life. I reached out for things that I saw shaping themselves in the mist. You reached out for things you saw standing out in the daylight. Your risk was less than mine ; but you are not the man to stop at a fence because it looks dangerous, nor am I. If you set out to drive a restive horse, and the man at your side snatches the reins out of your hands at a dangerous corner, and overturns the coach, are you responsible for what happens ? Think over it, Sir Charles, and try to be a little more charitable in your thoughts of me.

(LILIAN is impressed, and whispers earnestly to PRICHARD REES, who smiles and shakes his head.

EDMUNDS re-enters, R., carrying a coat, a hat, and a dressing case. Helps SIR CHARLES on with his coat.)

EDMUNDS (handing bag to SIR CHARLES) : There's a revolver in the bag, Sir Charles, and a flask of sherry, and a few sundries, and a small scrap of paper with S.O.S. on it, in case you want me in a hurry. (*Eagerly.*) I'll be ready, sir. (*Looks defiantly at ROWLAND.*)

SIR CHARLES : Thank you, Edmunds. I shan't forget.

(EDMUNDS goes out reluctantly, R.)

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SIR CHARLES (*to ROWLAND*) : Now, sir, I am ready.

(*LILIAN throws her arms round her brother's neck and clings to him. He kisses her, whispers a few light, encouraging words, gently releases himself, and waves his hand from the door. He passes out, L., and is immediately followed by the two guards. LILIAN crosses to the window.*)

ROWLAND (*from the door*) : Come, Citizen Commander. The Committee meets in half-an-hour, and your presence will be necessary.

PRICHARD REES (*crosses quickly to ROWLAND—in a low voice*) : You've forgotten the President's order to search the place. I haven't.

ROWLAND : No—you wouldn't forget that.

(*ROWLAND turns sharply, and goes out, L.*)

PRICHARD REES (*crosses to LILIAN*) : Now one can breathe freely. (*Watches LILIAN intently*) : There was a time when you had a warm corner in your heart for that saintly Anarchist.

LILIAN (*raises her head, a little dazed*) : Was there ?

PRICHARD REES : I was afraid he might hold you still with that wonderful power of his.

LILIAN : Please—please ! I want to forget. If Charles is safe, that's all that matters. I care for nothing else—nothing !

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PRICHARD REES : I suppose you care for Manor Glyn and all it means to your family ?

LILIAN : Oh, I love it. For hundreds of years it has been the home of my people. It would break my heart if I had to leave it.

PRICHARD REES (*watching her narrowly*) : Your broken heart wouldn't trouble John Roberts if he took it into his head to confiscate the estate.

LILIAN (*frightened*) : Confiscate Manor Glyn ! He couldn't do that, could he ?

PRICHARD REES : Oh, yes, he could ! A decree of the Revolutionary Council empowers him to confiscate the property and seize the person of anyone who refuses to acknowledge the Republic. But for my interference, Manor Glyn would have been confiscated last week. If your brother defies the President he is lost, and his property is lost, too.

LILIAN (*agitated*) : But it would be robbery. Such a thing can't be done in Wales.

PRICHARD REES : Don't deceive yourself. It can and will be done, if your brother shows the least hostility to the Government.

LILIAN : Is that why they have taken him away, to have him in their power ?

PRICHARD REES : I am afraid it is. But you can defeat them yet. There is a way.

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LILIAN : I would do anything to help my brother—anything to save Manor Glyn. But what can I do ? I am helpless.

PRICHARD REES : You are not helpless. There is a way—if you will take it. (*He hesitates.*)

LILIAN (*eagerly*) : Yes—Go on—go on !

PRICHARD REES : You must marry a Revolutionary. It is hard for you, I know, but (*significantly*) he need only be a Revolutionary in name. Doesn't the truth begin to dawn upon you ? Don't you begin to understand why I have joined the Government ? I have always loved you, Lilian. (*She tries to interrupt him.*) No—I must speak, for your sake. To stand between you and the thing that threatens you, I have risked the anger of my friends and the vengeance of the Republic.

LILIAN (*agitated*) : I thought you were just a friend.

PRICHARD REES : I know. But how could I say anything ? Rowland Roberts stood between us. Even now I should have said nothing but for the peril you stand in. I can save you ; I can save Sir Charles, and I will. Marry me, and between us we can hold Manor Glyn until your brother has made peace with the Republic.

LILIAN : He will never do that. I—I must have time to think. My brother may return—he must return.

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PRICHARD REES : I wish I could think so. No—I dare not hide the truth from you. Sir Charles is known to be in league with others to overthrow the Republic. Rowland Roberts holds damning evidence against him, and will use it without mercy. You must decide quickly. Tomorrow may be too late. (*Footsteps are heard approaching, L.*) It's Rowland Roberts. Give me your keys, quickly. I must pretend to search the safe to lull his suspicions. (*LILIAN hesitates.*) Quick—for Heaven's sake! (*She hands him her keys.*) Huddle up in that chair, and pretend to be afraid of me. (*Feverishly unlocks safe, examines papers.*)

(*ROWLAND appears in the doorway, L.*)

ROWLAND : Citizen Rees! The President commands your instant attendance at the trial of Sir Charles Lloyd.

PRICHARD REES : I am ready, Citizen Rowland. I have only just finished my search.

ROWLAND : You have taken a long time about it. Have you found anything of importance?

PRICHARD REES : It is difficult to say—until I have made a closer examination.

ROWLAND : In that case, I should advise you to leave it for another time, and hurry to the Council Chamber.

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PRICHARD REES : Yes—I think I had better. (*Locks safe—turns to LILIAN with a sneer of derision.*) I wish you good day, Citizeness. May you be more obliging when I come next.

(*PRICHARD REES turns from her with an ironical bow—puts her keys in his pocket, hurries towards L.*)

LILIAN (*for a moment too astounded to speak—calls after him distractedly*) : My keys—give me my keys! (*She follows him quickly to the door, but he slams it in her face. She quickly controls herself and faces ROWLAND.*) I should be glad, sir, if you would follow your companion. (*With an imperious gesture she points to the door.*) Your presence is not only painful to me, but an insult.

ROWLAND : I am sorry. I will go. (*Turns from her slowly—reluctantly.*)

LILIAN : Oh! to think that you are what you are—to think that you have trapped my brother and planned his ruin—you who were once his friend!

ROWLAND (*turns sharply, and looks at her*) : I have done nothing of the sort. Your suspicions are unjust.

LILIAN : Unjust! What is your “Justice” but an excuse for hideous wrong-doing? Was it “Justice” to set your spies to watch us, to rob us, to open our letters, to cut down our beautiful trees, and help yourself to anything we possess? Are

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rules and obligations of honour just matters of convenience to be laid aside when it suits you? Justice! Liberty! What do they mean in your mouth?

ROWLAND: You are bitter. May I plead that I am only one of three, and have to submit to many things I don't like any more than you do?

LILIAN (*with a scornful laugh*): One of three men who have but to nod to have any crime committed! I thought once you were a courteous gentleman, a fit companion for my knightly brother—yes! even to be my friend—and now—and now—(*suddenly breaks down and sobs*).

(ROWLAND, *stirred to his depths, seems about to throw all restraint to the winds and attempt to comfort her, but with a powerful effort holds himself in check.*)

ROWLAND: It is one of the penalties of my position to see you suffer and to suffer myself. Time will show how little I am your enemy. Despising me as you do, what can I say to soften your anger—what can I say to lessen your distrust? I suppose you wouldn't believe me if I told you I would sacrifice my life to save your brother (*in a low voice*) because he is your brother?

LILIAN: How can I believe you after what has happened?

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ROWLAND : It all depends upon that—what has happened. Some day you will know.

(ROWLAND *turns upon his heel and hurries out, L., without looking back.*)

END OF SCENE.

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SCENE 2.

[Revolutionary Council Chamber on the outskirts of Manor Glyn. It is a long, bare room, with a window on each side, and a bust of Liberty and a red flag over the President's chair on the back wall. In the centre there is a long table littered with papers, and chairs are placed on both sides. A clock ticks on the mantelpiece. Door L., two-thirds down the stage.]

Evening is closing in.

As the curtain rises, JOHN ROBERTS walks in with a quick, firm step, and seats himself at the head of the table. He is a powerfully built man, with a dominating personality, a massive head, and dark, restless, passionate eyes, a square jaw, clean-shaven, well moulded face, and an overbearing manner. He is about 55, dresses well but plainly, and wears a red tie and red sash. Black Guards, armed with rifles, take up their position at the door. JOHN ROBERTS glances at reports which lie before him, and makes hasty marginal notes and muttered comments. One of the guards switches on the light and retires to the door.

In a few moments ROWLAND comes in slowly, in a thoughtful mood, and is followed by PRICHARD REES, who passes him jauntily, and takes his seat on one of the side chairs. ROWLAND sits down

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opposite him. The noise of many voices, mingled with boisterous laughter and horse play, comes in gusts through the open windows. The President looks up impatiently—and stamps his foot.]

JOHN ROBERTS (*to ROWLAND*): Tell those fellows out there to carry their noise further off. They disturb me.

(*ROWLAND goes to the door—waves the crowd off. A dead silence follows—ROWLAND returns to his seat, preoccupied.*)

JOHN ROBERTS (*raises his head—fixes his eyes sternly upon PRICHARD REES*): You have kept us waiting, Citizen Commander. You were a long time at Manor Glyn. Have you any explanation to offer? Take care it is a good one!

PRICHARD REES: That is my explanation. (*Throws a paper on the table in front of JOHN ROBERTS who takes it up and runs his eyes over it quickly.*)

JOHN ROBERTS: Where did you get this paper from?

PRICHARD REES: From the safe at Manor Glyn. (*ROWLAND rouses himself and listens intently*). By a subterfuge, I got the key from the Citizeness, and the rest was easy.

JOHN ROBERTS (*fixing his eyes upon the paper*): This paper proves the existence of a conspiracy to overthrow the Government.

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PRICHARD REES : And it proves the complicity of Citizen Lloyd. It is in his handwriting.

JOHN ROBERTS (*glances up, with a look of triumph*) : Then we have got him ! (*Frowns—looks puzzled—points at the document.*) But I see no names—only some figures and signs. What do you make of it ?

PRICHARD REES : Oh, those symbols represent the men who are in it with Lloyd. Most of them are old Army men, I expect, if we could get at the truth.

JOHN ROBERTS (*reflectively—tapping the paper with his fingers*) : Charles Lloyd, late Captain in the disbanded Lancers—he would naturally command these traitors. If we could read these signs and translate them into names, we should have the lot of them. There must be a key. Did you search the safe well ?

PRICHARD REES : As well as I could in the time at my disposal.

JOHN ROBERTS : Then you had better return to Manor Glyn this evening, and make another search ; and this time make sure. Guards ! Bring in the prisoner, Charles Lloyd.

(*The Guards at the door go out.*)

JOHN ROBERTS (*to ROWLAND*) : Have you anything to report ?

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ROWLAND : Yes, and most of it is unsatisfactory. The execution of Will, the shoemaker, seems to have upset the villagers a good deal. Wherever I went crowds followed me shouting, "What have you done with Will? Why did you hang poor Will? He was one of those queer fellows who fill a gap in the life of a place. Many an hour I have spent with him on the river side, listening to his quaint stories, and trying to pick up some of his skill with the rod. He was a loveable old fellow. He somehow crept into my heart. I am sorry he is dead.

JOHN ROBERTS : Drop sentiment, and get to business.

ROWLAND : You are apt to forget, I am afraid, that the two things are closely allied. I protested against his sentence at the time, but, as usual, I was over-ruled by you and the Citizen Commander. You took advantage of my absence to execute him—took away from me the last chance to intercede for him.

PRICHARD REES : You take this man's case very much to heart. Do you sympathise with his disloyal attitude?

ROWLAND (*turns sternly upon* PRICHARD REES): You are too blind to understand. But the day will come when you will be made to understand the danger of ruthless repression, if you can't feel the cruelty of it. Will's death has been like a match to light up the murmurs of the people. Remember,

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we are their servants, not their masters, and some day they will make us feel it.

JOHN ROBERTS (*impatiently*) : Schaw ! it's their nature to grumble. They expect miracles, and when they only get liberty and justice they whine like spoiled children.

ROWLAND (*quietly*) : They expect food and wages. "Give us bread !" they cry. "We can't live on proclamations and promises. What is the good of liberty if we starve ? "

JOHN ROBERTS : Ungrateful clods ! They are unwilling to pay the price of their emancipation. Bah ! they haven't the ambition of sheep !

(SIR CHARLES LLOYD *is brought in by* TOM JAMES *and* SAM WATKINS, *guards, who stand inside the door. JOHN ROBERTS motions the prisoner to a place near the table, where he stands behind a rail.*)

JOHN ROBERTS : Citizen Lloyd, you are charged with conspiring to overthrow by force of arms the People's Government. What have you to say in your defence ?

SIR CHARLES (*quietly*) : I have this to say. I deny your right to exercise the functions of Government. I deny your right to act in the name of the people. I deny your right to dispose of the liberty and property of private individuals who have taken no part—so far—against the Revolution.

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(ROWLAND, *like a man in a dream, crosses to TOM JAMES, beckons him aside, and whispers to him for several minutes, unnoticed. TOM nods, and watches his opportunity to slip out of the room.*)

JOHN ROBERTS: You deny a good deal, but you don't deny that you are an enemy of the Revolution. But whether you deny it or not, we have proof here (*holds up document in his hand*) of your guilt.

SIR CHARLES (*turns a little pale as he recognises the document*): If that paper proves anything, it proves that I am in revolt against men who are common thieves.

JOHN ROBERTS (*leans forward in his chair, throws out his hand threateningly*): Take care! You are not improving your position.

SIR CHARLES (*unmoved*): My position is an honourable one. You, not I, ought to be standing here to answer for your acts.

(ROWLAND *returns slowly to the table, and pays little apparent attention to what is passing. PRICHARD REES conveys furtive signs of friendly encouragement to SIR CHARLES LLOYD, taking care not to be observed by JOHN ROBERTS.*)

JOHN ROBERTS: In the meanwhile you are here on your trial, and the reckless courage of your race won't save you from a just penalty. You and your sort have fleeced the people long enough.

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You shall now work for the people as a common servant, and earn a daily wage for those you have trampled under foot.

SIR CHARLES: I have no objection to work. But why should I work, why should I earn money, to have it filched from me by you? Are you going to farm out the human race for the profit of your friends?

JOHN ROBERTS: That is what you have been doing. You filched the land from the people. It would be a fair return—robbery for robbery.

SIR CHARLES: That's the kind of thing an ignorant man might be pardoned for saying, but coming from you it is a cold, calculated, unpardonable lie.

(JOHN ROBERTS raises his hand as if he would strike the prisoner, but, putting a strong restraint upon himself, drops it again.)

SIR CHARLES: I don't fear you. If I am to die, you shall hear the truth before my voice is silenced.

JOHN ROBERTS: Go on! It's the privilege of the condemned to unburden their souls before they go to their doom. Your words won't go beyond these walls. You won't have the satisfaction of posing as a martyr to kindle the vengeance of your party.

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MYSTERIOUS VOICE (*from outside*) : His words will be carried to many places, and the people will rise to avenge him.

JOHN ROBERTS (*with a puzzled frown, glances quickly round the room*) : Who spoke ? (*Silence.*) Guards ! search the precincts.

SAM (*with a stupid grin*) : Where is the precincts, if you please, Mr. President ?

JOHN ROBERTS : Everywhere, you fool. Where is that fellow Tom ?

SAM : He had a pain in his stomach, if you please, and went out to fetch a drop of brandy.

JOHN ROBERTS : Citizen Commander—search every nook and corner about the place, and bring the offender here.

(PRICHARD REES *hurries out.*)

MYSTERIOUS VOICE (*with a mocking laugh*) : Citizen Commander—search ! search ! but you will only find trouble.

JOHN ROBERTS : A cock crows on the morning he's put into the pot, my friend.

MYSTERIOUS VOICE (*coming from another direction*) : You have got to catch him first. (*Chuckles derisively—crows.*)

JOHN ROBERTS : Well, Citizen Lloyd, if you refuse to work, you know the alternative ?

SIR CHARLES : If it were not a mockery, I would work. But you have taken away every

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inducement to work, killed every incentive to enterprise. People are not fools enough to slave without an object. You don't know the A. B. C. of cause and effect. You don't understand human nature. You don't see the ravages which follow your bloody figure of Liberty, nor the famished victims of your mad theories. If you do see these things, and do what you are doing, what are you ?

JOHN ROBERTS : I am the Protector of Democracy—the Destroyer of the enemies of the Revolution.

SIR CHARLES : Protector of Democracy !—you, who trampled universal suffrage under foot, you who tore down every barrier to the gratification of the mob's passions ! You stifle the cry of humanity, and call the silence of death Peace. You destroy the power of one class, and set up the tyranny of another. Is this Democracy ? Do you consult the people ? No ! you shoot them down. The arrogance of power has got hold of you, and made you its slave.

JOHN ROBERTS : Power is the greatest possession on earth, and ennobles the man who uses it for the benefit of the people. You and your capitalists shot down the workers when they demanded their share of the world's wealth. I shoot down the men who deny the people their right to liberty,

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their right to share equally with others the common inheritance of man.

SIR CHARLES : If, as you say, people have been shot down, they have been shot down by their elected Government, according to law, and not by self-elected individuals, who preach hatred of their fellow men and spurn every law—human and Divine.

JOHN ROBERTS (*jumps to his feet, passionately gesticulating, a fanatical light blazing in his eyes*) : Yes ! We stand for violence against all exploiters ; and we are not abashed by the cries of those who weep and shudder in the presence of a great struggle. We openly declare that we are carrying on war against all classes who refuse to accept our formula of Government. In our eyes there are only two classes : those who are for us, and those who are against us. Woe to those who are not for us !

MYSTERIOUS VOICE (*from another direction*) : Woe to you and all evil doers—for God's wrath shall overtake you.

SIR CHARLES (*passionately*) : Man ! if you are infamous, don't glory in your infamy. Think what you are doing. God ! when I see hanging from the trees the ghastly fruit of your " Justice " I despair of my country. And you—you who do these things—dare to condemn me. For what ?

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JOHN ROBERTS : You are an enemy of the people.

SIR CHARLES : Am I ? I would, if I could, make the people happy and prosperous. (*Pauses—looks doubtingly about him.*) But what's the use of saying anything ? You wouldn't believe me ; and you wouldn't understand.

ROWLAND (*raises his head, looks straight at SIR CHARLES*) : Go on ! It is your right. A political trial turns upon political pleas.

SIR CHARLES : Then I should like to put my views on record. I suppose we all have ideals. In the ideal community as I conceive it (*ROWLAND listens attentively*) manual workers and brain workers of all classes would be on complete social equality with one another, divided only by differences of employment and economic interests. A universal conception of social equality and national unity once established, these differences would disappear in a fair compromise. If I deserve death for holding these opinions, then I am not afraid to die.

(*ROWLAND takes the President aside, and talks to him earnestly in an undertone. They return to their places at the table. PRICHARD REES reenters, and in reply to a gesture of inquiry from the President shakes his head.*)

PRICHARD REES : No, I couldn't find him.

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JOHN ROBERTS (*shrugs his shoulders—turns to SIR CHARLES LLOYD*): Citizen Lloyd, I have listened to you patiently, but have heard nothing in extenuation of your crime. You have conspired against the Revolutionary Government, and your life and estate are forfeit. By an act of grace, your judges are willing to pardon you, and leave you in possession of Manor Glyn, on one condition, that you agree to serve the Republic.

SIR CHARLES: If I refuse?

JOHN ROBERTS: You will be executed as a traitor, and Manor Glyn will be forfeit to the State.

SIR CHARLES (*after a long and painful self-examination*): There is my sister. Will you turn her out upon the road. God help her! in these wild times. What will happen to her if you do?

JOHN ROBERTS: Through her you feel the full blast and meaning of your treason. You should have thought of these things before you raised the standard of revolt. (*A solemn pause.*) Your answer. I ask you for the last time.

SIR CHARLES: I will answer as she would have me answer. I'll not dishonour my name. I refuse to serve the Republic. God save the King!

JOHN ROBERTS: Guards! Remove the prisoner to the cells.

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(TOM JAMES suddenly appears—stepping out of the ranks of the Guards; who flock in and surround Sir Charles.)

TOM : Begging your pardon, Mr. President, there is no room in the cells.

JOHN ROBERTS : Make room, then. Tell the executioners to get rid of some of the prisoners.

TOM : They 'on't do it. They have been working hard since daylight, and have gone off to the tavern to enjoy themselves. Haven't they, Sam ?

SAM : Aie, indeed, I see them going there with my own eyes, and they 'on't come away if you don't drag them.

PRICHARD REES : You can do without the executioners. Why not turn the condemned prisoners into the square, and use a machine gun ? It would be the quickest way. That's how they manage things in Turkey and Russia.

TOM : And take the bread out of the mouths of the executioners ? They 'ould strike, for sure, if you do that. 'Ouldn't they, Sam ?

SAM : Aie, indeed, and there is reason in it, too. It 'ould be a pity to lose them—they are good workmen, and had plenty of practice.

JOHN ROBERTS : Strike, would they ? If they disobey orders, herd them into the square with the prisoners, and give them a dose of machine gun.

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(Turns to TOM and SAM.) And you! You are a couple of fools. You are not worth the cost of a rope. Get out!

TOM (*humbly*): Aie, indeed, me and Sam are proper fools; and not worth powder and shot, neither, are we, Sam?

JOHN ROBERTS (*impatiently*): Get out!

(TOM and SAM *sneak off sheepishly to the door, and stand there on guard, grinning at each other.*)

ROWLAND: Why not lodge the prisoner in the Old Smithy for to-night? It would be better than troubling the executioners.

JOHN ROBERTS: Is the place safe?

ROWLAND: It has held prisoners before.

PRICHARD REES: It's quite safe. I've had the windows boarded up and barred, and a lock and bolts put on the door.

JOHN ROBERTS (*to PRICHARD REES*): Very well. But, remember, you are responsible for his safety. You'd better double the Guards to-night, and take no chances.

(JOHN ROBERTS *motions to the Guards to remove the prisoner, who is escorted out in solemn silence.*)

PRICHARD REES: At what hour is the execution to take place?

JOHN ROBERTS: In the morning, as soon as it is light enough for the people to see and take warning.

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ROWLAND : Won't you give him a little time to reconsider his position ? He may change his mind.

PRICHARD REES : Not he. I know Citizen Lloyd. He has chosen for himself, and, once he has decided, nothing will change him.

ROWLAND : Opposition from you, Citizen Commander, I always expect. You have blundered before, and you will blunder again if you forget that Charles Lloyd is a favourite of the people. It only needs persecution to make him a popular idol.

JOHN ROBERTS : What do you say, Citizen Rees ? Do you agree with Rowland ?

PRICHARD REES : No—I think he's wrong. We have nothing to fear from the people. They are not exactly Revivalists just now.

ROWLAND : Perhaps not. But the religious feeling in Wales is not dead. It just slumbers. If you send Sir Charles Lloyd to his death——

PRICHARD REES (*with a sneer*) : Sir Charles Lloyd ?

ROWLAND : If you send Sir Charles Lloyd to his death, it may set ablaze the embers that never die in a Welshman's breast.

JOHN ROBERTS (*sombrely*) : Take care, Rowland ! Your pity for traitors is becoming dangerous, inconsistent with your duty to the Revolution. If

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you have a lingering fondness for your old friends of Manor Glyn, root it out, or it may destroy you.

ROWLAND (*warmly*) : Then let it destroy me. The conditions of life may become too hard for one to care to live.

JOHN ROBERTS (*regarding ROWLAND with a brooding frown*) : Has the virus of treason poisoned your mind, too? Have these aristocrats cast a spell upon you? If the Republic is to stand, it must stand on soil cleansed by fire and sword, or the weeds of the old system will grow up and choke it. What do you say, Citizen Commander?

PRICHARD REES : I agree with you. It's not the time for kid gloves and lavender water.

JOHN ROBERTS (*to ROWLAND*) : You hear? (*ROWLAND bows his head in silence.*)

(*The President takes up a report from the table, unfolds the paper, glances over it. His expression changes.*)

JOHN ROBERTS : Hullo! What's this? (*Looks at PRICHARD REES with stormy eyes.*) Nice happenings! You have been neglecting your duty, Citizen Commander.

PRICHARD REES : In what way? I wasn't aware of it.

JOHN ROBERTS (*thrusting the report into PRICHARD REES'S hand*) : Look at that! Criminals cut down and set free almost under the eyes of the

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executioners—justice mocked at and thwarted by unseen hands.

PRICHARD REES : It's the first I've heard of it.

JOHN ROBERTS : It is intolerable ! Why, these daring agents of the enemy have stolen the very ropes almost out of the executioner's hands, and you are unaware of it !

PRICHARD REES : The explanation is simple enough. The executioners have to move on quickly from place to place, and do their work as they go. They have no time to wait for results. You must change the system if you want closer supervision.

JOHN ROBERTS : Then change it, and let there be no more escapes. Make out the warrants, Rowland.

(JOHN ROBERTS *goes out.*)

ROWLAND : Will you wait for the warrants ?

PRICHARD REES : No, thank you, I'm dog tired. Here you are (*tosses list to ROWLAND*), you can drop the warrants into my letter box on your way home. (*Yawns.*) You are a fool to trouble about the Manor Glyn people. They have gone out of your life—unless (*with a laugh*) you join them in the next world. Even rats forsake a sinking ship. Apply the moral, my dear fellow. (*Yawns.*) Good-night.

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(ROWLAND *listens in contemptuous silence, and, as PRICHARD REES goes out, sits down, his head resting on his hand, thinking deeply. In a few moments, he rouses himself, closes the door, turns the key in the lock, draws down the blinds of the window next to the door, lowers the lights, crosses the room to the opposite window, opens it, and looks out.*)

ROWLAND (*in a low voice*) : Are you there, Tom ?

TOM (*raises his head above the window sill*) : Is it all right in there ?

ROWLAND (*in a tone of relief*) : Yes—they have gone, at last.

(TOM *climbs in through the window.*)

ROWLAND : Is Sir Charles in the smithy ?

TOM : Yes, thank goodness ! It was fine the way you worked it. If that devil, Prichard Rees, doesn't suspect, there's a good chance to get him off. (*Stretches himself—stands a foot taller—his assumed deformity gone—drops his Welsh accent.*) It's a relief to be oneself again.

ROWLAND : Who guards the prisoners to-night ?

TOM (*with a smile*) : I and Sam, inside the smithy. (*Thoughtfully.*) But the guard will be doubled outside.

ROWLAND : Yes, I know. It adds to the risk.

TOM : Well, we are used to risks, and there's a big supply under this beautiful Republic. (*Laughs.*)

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ROWLAND (*raises his hand warningly*) : Hush !
Laughter is the mother of treason, remember, and
has cost many a poor wretch his life when it
happened in the wrong place.

TOM : Yes, by George, we are all Puritans of
a queer type these days. (*Breaks into a ripple of
laughter.*)

ROWLAND (*smiling*) : You are incorrigible !

TOM : I can't help it. I was thinking of the
President's puzzled look when the cock crew. He
didn't like the "Mysterious Voice."

ROWLAND : Take care, Tom. If you are
found out you'll have a quick passage to another
planet.

TOM : By gosh ! It was a fine game. There
they were stumbling after me through the dark,
listening for my voice, and crying, "There he is—
there he is !" And there I was, too—throwing
my voice here and there and everywhere, and
driving them wild to catch me. They thought it
was the Unseen Hand ! I tell you, I nearly died
smothered with laughter.

ROWLAND : What have you done with the
executioner's ropes ?

TOM (*taps his pocket, shows the end of a rope*) :
Here they are. I thought you might want them.

ROWLAND : I shall—if things pan out as I
expect.

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(There are three taps at the door.)

TOM : That's Sam's signal. I am wanted.

ROWLAND : You had better clear out. We shall meet later. Be careful.

TOM *(nods—resumes his deformity—and crosses to the window—looks out cautiously)* : I am always careful—'till I forget !

(TOM disappears through the window. ROWLAND walks slowly to the table, sits down thoughtfully, and fills in the death warrants, every now and then pausing and muttering to himself.)

ROWLAND *(takes up one of the warrants and looks at it fixedly)* : The Citizen Charles Lloyd. Must my hand write the damnable words that—*(breaks off passionately)*—No ! my God ! No ! *(He springs to his feet with a resolute, set face.)* No, Prichard Rees, the game isn't yours yet !

(He unlocks a drawer in his desk, takes out a mask and cloak, and disguises himself. From the same drawer he takes a revolver and a sword, which he conceals under his cloak, then gathers up the death warrants, thrusts them into his pocket, unlocks the door silently, and leaves the room by the window, cautiously closing it after him.)

CURTAIN.

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ACT II.

The Same Night.

[SCENE.—*The Old Smithy, Manor Glyn. Moonlight filters in through a lancet opening high up in the gable, and the flickering light from a lantern hung on the wall mingles with the gloom. Odd pieces of iron, blackened rafters, a broken bellows, and a wide, gaping chimney complete the features of a deserted-looking place. On the floor in the middle of the Smithy there is strewn a heap of straw for prisoners to lie on.*

As the curtain rises, SIR CHARLES is seen walking slowly to and fro, absorbed in thought. TOM and SAM are seated on a rough bench near the door, their eyes following the tireless movements of the prisoner.

In a little while the key is turned in the lock from outside, the door is opened, and PRICHARD REES enters, and motions the guards to retire, which they do noiselessly—like disappearing shadows. PRICHARD REES locks the door after them, and then approaches SIR CHARLES with a friendly smile.]

PRICHARD REES : At last ! we are alone and I can talk to you as a friend.

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SIR CHARLES : Are you a friend ? I thought Rowland Roberts was a friend. Between you, you have brought me to this. (*Sweeps his hand round to indicate his prison.*)

PRICHARD REES : If you said *he* had brought you to this, you'd have been nearer the mark. I am here to set you free.

SIR CHARLES : I have lost faith in words and promises. The Revolutionary definition of honour is—opportunity.

PRICHARD REES : Well, I can't blame you for your doubts ; but it would be much easier for me to help you if you trusted me.

SIR CHARLES : Why should I trust you ?

PRICHARD REES : Because there is no one else you can trust. If I fail you, there is no hope. To-morrow at daybreak—you understand ? (SIR CHARLES *bows his head.*) The time is short. If anything is to be done, it must be done quickly.

SIR CHARLES : Life at present is not such an enviable thing that I should care much to keep it. But for my sister, I should have few regrets. (*A pause.*) There was a time when I might have appealed to you to protect her.

PRICHARD REES : I am ready to protect her now. I am ready to risk my life for you or her. If you will trust me and tell me the names of some

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of your friends, I will let them know how you are situated, and find a way to save you.

SIR CHARLES : My friends are enemies of the Revolution.

PRICHARD REES : Well ?

SIR CHARLES : If I gave them away to the Commander of the Revolutionary Guards, what would they think of me ?

PRICHARD REES : The Commander of the Guards accepted that position the better to serve his friends.

SIR CHARLES : That remains to be proved. What guarantee have I that you wouldn't abuse my confidence ?

PRICHARD REES : At this moment isn't my life in your hands ? Call in the guard, tell them what has passed between us, and where should I be ? The President's ear is always open to tales of treachery ; and there are plenty of fellows who'd denounce me and step into my shoes.

SIR CHARLES (*thoughtfully*) : Yes—that is true. (*Looks searchingly at PRICHARD REES.*) If I decide to trust you, have you any plan ?

PRICHARD REES : Yes—and it must succeed—if I can win the confidence of your friends and convince them that I am acting with your knowledge. Give me a note or some token to carry to them, and

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I'll undertake to return with sufficient help to set you free.

SIR CHARLES (*shakes his head slowly*) : You have doubled the Guards. Why did you throw difficulties in your own way if you meant to help me ?

PRICHARD REES : I had to—to blind the President. But I'll arrange to change the Guard at the right moment. That will be our chance. A surprise rush, and the thing is done.

SIR CHARLES : It sounds promising. Yes, I think it might be done. But suppose I escape ? The peril of my sister will be greater than ever. I dare not go to her. If the Revolutionaries found me at Manor Glyn, their wrath would fall upon her for harbouring me.

PRICHARD REES : You are right. You'll have to keep clear of Manor Glyn. Your friends must look after her.

SIR CHARLES : There's Colonel Cradoc. She might go to him.

PRICHARD REES : The very man. You couldn't trust her in better hands. I'm glad you thought of him. Where is he to be found ?

SIR CHARLES : If I tell you, will you swear that you won't betray him ?

PRICHARD REES : I'll swear anything to help you and your sister.

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SIR CHARLES : You will find him at the foot of Dimbath Mountain.

PRICHARD REES : Ha ! (*Mutters to himself.*)

SIR CHARLES (*suspiciously*) : What's that ?

PRICHARD REES : Nothing ! I was thinking what a safe place he has chosen for his camp. But it's a long way. If I'm to find him in time, I'd better hurry up.

SIR CHARLES : Yes—I'll give you a note. (*Tears a leaf from his pocket book and writes rapidly.*) Give that to Colonel Cradoc (*hands note to PRICHARD REES*). He will act as you direct without question. (*Tears another leaf from his pocket book and writes another note.*) That's for my sister. Guard those notes with your life, and, if you are in danger, destroy them.

PRICHARD REES (*placing the notes in his pocket*) : I will. With these credentials to help me, I can't fail.

SIR CHARLES (*offering his hand*) : Then go, my friend, go ! (*PRICHARD REES shakes hands.*) And good luck go with you.

PRICHARD REES : It will ! Keep a good heart, Lloyd. I'll not let the grass grow under my feet.

(*PRICHARD REES hurries to the door, opens it, and calls, "Hi there, Guard."* TOM JAMES and SAM WATKINS *re-enter.*)

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PRICHARD REES : Keep sharp watch to-night, and shoot at sight any prowlers who come around without the pass-word.

TOM (*taps his rifle*) : Right, Citizen Commander.

PRICHARD REES (*turns with a frown to SIR CHARLES LLOYD*) : Since you refuse to make your submission to the Republic, your sentence will be carried out at daybreak.

(PRICHARD *turns on his heel, nods curtly, and goes out*. TOM *shoots the bolts into their place, glances curiously at the prisoner, and shakes up the straw bed*. He and SAM *sit down on the rough bench, back to back, and, supporting each other, light their pipes and smoke in silence*. SIR CHARLES *renews his restless walk, and, after a time, throws himself down on the straw and fitfully slumbers*. In a little while ROWLAND, *wearing a mask and loose cloak, which effectually disguise him, emerges from the Smithy chimney, looks across at TOM and SAM, makes a sign of silence, cautiously steps across to where SIR CHARLES is sleeping, and rouses him with a touch*. SIR CHARLES *springs to his feet, and stares with surprise and mistrust at the masked man, who takes a coil of rope from under his cloak and throws it to TOM, who uncoils it*.)

SIR CHARLES : Is the hour come ? (*Looks at his watch by the light of the lantern*.) It wants three hours to daylight. You are early, my friend.

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ROWLAND (*the masked man*) : I am a friend. Stand by the door, Sam, and give warning when the sentry approaches.

(SAM *takes up his position by the door.*)

SIR CHARLES (*sceptically*) : A second friend in this night that has no to-morrow ! I am blessed with friends, indeed, when there is so little time for acts of friendship. But there are so many enemies who were once my friends. How am I to know you are my friend ?

ROWLAND (*takes a sword from under his cloak and offers it to SIR CHARLES*) : By this sword. Take it, and use it to defend yourself.

SIR CHARLES (*takes the sword eagerly*) : Ah ! this is an argument more convincing than a thousand protestations. Let me see your face, friend, to know to whom I am indebted for this welcome gift.

ROWLAND : It would serve no purpose. Who was that other friend who visited you to-night ? (SIR CHARLES *remains silent*. ROWLAND *turns to SAM*.)

SAM : It was the Citizen Commander.

ROWLAND : I thought so ! Beware of that man. If there is one man you should distrust more than another it is that man. Tell me quickly what passed between you. (SIR CHARLES *is embarrassed and hesitates.*) Don't hesitate. That man is scheming at this moment to get your sister into his power, to destroy you, to seize your estate.

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SIR CHARLES : You are talking wildly. Such treachery would be impossible, even in these times.

ROWLAND : Not to the man who got the key of your safe from your sister by a trick, and stole your private papers to use against you at your trial.

SIR CHARLES : Strange ! He said it was Rowland Roberts.

ROWLAND (*with a passionate gesture*) : God ! that man stops at nothing. If you love your sister, if you have any regard for her honour, tell me at once what you said to him.

SIR CHARLES (*shaken by Rowland's passionate earnestness*) : I have trusted him. If he proves false—my friends, my sister will be ruined.

ROWLAND : Then we must act. Don't ask questions, but do as I tell you. It is the only chance. Here, Sam, give me your coat. (SAM *hands his coat to ROWLAND, who passes it on to SIR CHARLES.*) Put that coat on, Sir Charles, and give me yours. (SIR CHARLES *changes coats.* SAM *puts on SIR CHARLES'S coat.* ROWLAND *hands SIR CHARLES a mask.*) Slip that over your face. Now, Sam, down on the straw. (SAM *grins and throws himself on the straw.* TOM *ties up SAM'S ankles and wrists.*) The drug, Tom. (TOM *hands a bottle to ROWLAND.*)

SIR CHARLES (*uneasily*) : You are not going to drug him ?

THE ARROGANCE OF POWER

ROWLAND (*reads label on bottle*) : "Laudanum—poison." It's only coffee, Sam. (*Hands the bottle to SAM.*) Drink it and drop the bottle by your side, where it will be easily seen. (*SAM does as he is told.*) Now, Sir Charles—(*suddenly holds his breath, breathes a 'Sh !*)

TOM (*holds up his hand warningly*) : The sentry.

SENTRY (*stopping outside the door*) : All right in there, comrade ?

TOM : Yes, thank you, as well as can be expected. A bit slow to be sure, only for the 'bacco and Sam.

SENTRY : It'll be more lively if you drop a match on the straw. Try it ! (*Moves off, laughing.*)

ROWLAND : This way, Sir Charles—quick ! (*Leads SIR CHARLES to the chimney.*) There's a rope suspended inside, and another outside, to let you down into the shrubbery. Once there, wait for the moon to go behind the clouds before you move. I'll follow you.

SIR CHARLES (*thrusts something into ROWLAND's hand*) : In memory of to-night. It's a miniature of my sister.

(*SIR CHARLES quickly disappears into the gaping chimney, leaving ROWLAND gazing at the miniature.*)

ROWLAND : Lilian ! (*Rouses himself—hands a mask to TOM.*) Put that on, and follow Sir Charles.

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TOM : After you, Rowland.

ROWLAND : No nonsense, man—go ! (TOM *moves quickly towards the chimney.*) If I don't join you in five minutes, slip into the dingle, and take the path through the wood to The Cwm. Give Sir Charles a horse, and let him go his own way. You make for the plantation by the Stone Cross, and keep a sharp look-out. Challenge all passing horsemen, and if they answer "Carnarvon " you will know they are Colonel Cradoc's men. Tell them Sir Charles is safe, and not to stir from Dimbath until they see him. Now, begone.

(TOM *springs into the chimney and disappears.* ROWLAND *crosses swiftly to the forge door, silently draws the bolts, and leaves the door ajar.*)

ROWLAND : All right, Sam ? (SAM *nods.*) Gain as much time for us as you can. (Sam *nods vigorously.*)

(As ROWLAND *disappears into the chimney*, SAM *rolls over on his back and snores heavily.* In a little while the forge door is *pushed open cautiously*, and a Sentry looks in with a start of surprise. Creeping towards SAM, he stares down at him with a scared look, and then rushes out and raises an alarm, "The prisoner has escaped! The prisoner has escaped!" The hubbub of many voices is heard, and in a few minutes the President, half-dressed, rushes in, with ROWLAND at his heels, unmasked.)

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JOHN ROBERTS : What's this—what's this—the prisoner escaped ? (*Snatches the lantern from the wall and holds it over SAM.*) Drunk ! (*Shakes him roughly.*) Wake up ! (*SAM moans and breathes stertorously.*) Ha ! (*Pounces on the empty bottle—reads label.*) Drugged ! The villains have drugged him. Call the Citizen Commander.

ROWLAND : It's no use calling him. He's not in his lodgings.

JOHN ROBERTS : He's never at his post when he's wanted. (*Shakes SAM violently.*) Wake up, man, and tell us what has happened.

ROWLAND (*points to SAM'S ankles.*) The poor fellow is bound. (*Hastily unties the rope—throws it on the floor.*)

JOHN ROBERTS (*picks up the rope*) : The executioner's rope !

ROWLAND : It looks like another adventure of the Unseen Hand. It's a pity we can't catch him.

JOHN ROBERTS : I pity him when I do. He's running up a long account. (*Points to SAM.*) Throw a bucket of cold water over him.

SAM (*moves convulsively—moans horribly—and suddenly shrieks out*) : Oh, Tom, Tom ! don't let them kill me. (*Gasps, starts up, stretches out his hand.*) A drop of brandy—a drop of brandy ! I am dying ! (*Falls back helplessly.*) I am just going—after Tom.

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ROWLAND (*holds a flask to SAM'S lips*) : Come, Sam, drink a drop—it will make you feel better.

JOHN ROBERTS (*stamping about impatiently*) : Don't waste time with the fool. Every minute is precious.

SAM (*wearily*) : Every minute is very precious when you are drinking good stuff like this. (*Sits up with sudden terror—points about him with a trembling finger.*) The rats!—the rats!—they are at me again. (*Moans.*) They will carry me off like they did poor Tom. (*Frightened.*) Keep them off! Keep them off!

ROWLAND : The poor fellow is off his head. The drug seems to have had a terrible effect.

JOHN ROBERTS (*turns away angrily*) : Faugh! it's delirium tremens. We are beset with traitors. Come on! It's no good wasting time here. We must send out a searching party at once.

(*The President, accompanied by ROWLAND, hurries out. The sentry remains, looking down at SAM with nervous curiosity. Suddenly SAM starts up wildly, clutches the sentry by the legs.*)

SAM: Hide me—quick! The devil is up the chimney!

(*The sentry, with a look of terror towards the chimney, breaks away from SAM and rushes out through the forge door. SAM rolls over on the straw and shakes with laughter.*)

CURTAIN.

THE ARROGANCE OF POWER

ACT III.

The Following Morning.

[SCENE.—Oak room at Manor Glyn. EDMUNDS is laying the breakfast-table—his thoughts wandering—talks to himself. Places armchair at the head of the table, and contemplates it wistfully.]

EDMUNDS (*to the chair*): Poor young master! (*Shakes his head sadly.*) He'll never sit in it again. Oh, the devils! (*Shakes his fist at an invisible enemy.*) The devils!

(LILIAN comes in slowly, R., in an attitude of dejection. Dressed in black, she looks very beautiful, despite her grief. She raises her eyes to EDMUNDS as he stands apostrophising SIR CHARLES'S chair.)

LILIAN: Take it away, Edmunds. It won't be wanted—to-day. You forget.

EDMUNDS (*with forced cheerfulness*): No, Miss Lilian, that's just what I haven't done. It's my belief that the young master will give them Revolutionaries the surprise of their lives. Don't you worry, Miss Lilian. I shouldn't wonder if he didn't just walk in this minute and ask for his breakfast. I'll keep it hot for him, that I will.

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LILIAN : I am afraid to let myself hope. Even now—he may—he may be (*she covers her eyes with her hands, and shudders*).

EDMUNDS (*tremblingly regarding her*) : No, Miss Lilian—I'll never believe that. If—if he was in trouble, he'd surely send the S.O.S. He promised me, and he'd never break his word to an old servant. He'd remember Edmunds, the old Lancer as fought by the side of his father, and give him a chance to rush up the reserves.

LILIAN : I don't know. I'm afraid—I'm afraid to think ! I had the most dreadful dreams last night.

EDMUNDS : That's lucky, Miss Lilian. Dreams go by contraries. Why, many a time I've dreamed I was killed, and here I am alive and hearty at 86. It's Fate—that's what it is, and them Revolutionaries can't keep Master Charles in prison if Fate's against them. (*Bell rings violently.*) Who's that, I wonder ?

LILIAN : Go and see. (*EDMUNDS is shuffling off.*) It may be a message from him. Go quickly, Edmunds.

(*EDMUNDS hurries out, L. LILIAN waits in strained suspense, her eyes fixed on the door. EDMUNDS announces " Captain Rees " and retires as PRICHARD REES comes in jauntily.*)

PRICHARD : Good news and good morning, Miss Lloyd.

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LILIAN : Charles ! Is he safe ?

PRICHARD REES (*giving her a note*) : Read that. It is from him. (LILIAN *tears open the note.*) It will give you more comfort than anything I can say.

LILIAN (*reading eagerly*) : Yes—he says you have planned his escape—and I am to trust you—and leave Manor Glyn. Oh ! how can I thank you !

PRICHARD REES : By following your brother's wishes, and escaping with me across the border.

LILIAN (*surprised*) : Across the border—with you ? Does he wish that ?

PRICHARD REES : Yes. He thought of Colonel Cradoc as an escort, but he has his hands full, and can't come. Besides, it would be dangerous.

LILIAN : But my brother—if he is free—why doesn't he come ?

PRICHARD REES : Manor Glyn is watched. If he came here, he would be trapped, and both of you would be lost—you for harbouring him.

LILIAN : Oh, yes—I had forgotten. But he is quite safe—you are sure ?

PRICHARD REES : You shall see him and judge for yourself. You will meet him—across the border.

LILIAN : Ah, that is something to look forward to—safety after this daily dread. Forgive me if I have hesitated. We have been so often deceived.

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(*With sudden suspicion.*) Yes—you deceived me, too.

PRICHARD REES : Did I ? I don't remember.

LILIAN : The key of the safe—you took it away.

PRICHARD REES (*with a smile*) : Oh, that, I took it to throw dust in the eyes of that spy, Rowland Roberts.

LILIAN : What have you done with it ?

PRICHARD REES : I gave it to your brother. Did I do wrong ?

LILIAN : Oh, no. I see now that my suspicions wronged you. Forgive me.

PRICHARD REES : Oh, that's all right. It's a jolly useful key if it has turned the lock on all your doubts.

LILIAN (*earnestly*) : It has, indeed.

PRICHARD REES : Then please go and get ready at once. I've got two horses saddled in the stable, and there's no time to lose. To tell you the truth, I've been up all night on your brother's business, and I want to see you safe before I go to sleep on my feet.

LILIAN (*impulsively gives him her hand*) : Indeed—indeed, I am very grateful.

PRICHARD REES (*points to table*) : May I help myself while you are getting ready ? I'm famishing.

LILIAN : Oh, yes, please do. (*Going.*) I shan't be long.

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(PRICHARD REES *opens the door for her, R., bows her out, returns to the table and helps himself. EDMUNDS enters, L.*)

EDMUNDS : Can I do anything for you, sir ?

PRICHARD REES : You can fill this flask for me (*hands flask to EDMUNDS*). And pack up some sandwiches. Hark in your ear, Edmunds. I'm going to take Miss Lilian out of this trap to a place of safety. Wish me luck, old man.

EDMUNDS (*at sideboard, filling flask and packing sandwiches*) : I do, sir, with all my heart. And I am thankful to know the young master is safe. It comes natural, doesn't it, you being at college together, to stand by one another at a time like this ? It will stand to your credit, sir (*raises his eyes reverently*), when the end comes.

PRICHARD REES (*hastily*) : Yes—yes, that's all right. And, look here. Mum's the word about my share in this business. I don't want the President to know, or there'll be the devil to pay.

EDMUNDS : I understand, sir. A friend of the family has only got to say, "Wipe it off the slate," and it's done. Let him come. He won't get anything out of me, thumb-screws or no thumb-screws.

PRICHARD REES : There's another man—more dangerous than the President—Citizen Rowland.

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EDMUNDS : Dear me ! I shouldn't have thought that. (*A pause.*)

PRICHARD REES (*suddenly*) : You are an old soldier, Edmunds, and have often killed your man, I expect, in the wild border raids in India ?

EDMUNDS : Yes, sir—I suppose I have, when my blood was up—as a matter of duty, not with malice aforethought, if I may say so.

PRICHARD REES : You did that for your country. Would you do as much for Miss Lilian if she were in danger ?

EDMUNDS : That I would, sir. I wouldn't think twice about it. What is my old life worth that I wouldn't risk it for her sake ?

PRICHARD REES : Spoken like a man ! (*Significantly.*) Keep your powder dry, and watch Citizen Rowland—for her sake. You understand ?

EDMUNDS : Yes, sir, I do. 'Sh ! Here's Miss Lilian. She don't let the grass grow under her feet when there is anything astir. No—she's got the Lancer blood in her right enough—God bless her !

(*LILIAN re-enters, R., in a riding habit.*)

PRICHARD REES (*hurrying to meet her*) : It reminds me of old hunting days to see you in your habit. You look charming.

LILIAN : How long ago those days seem ! But don't let us talk about that happy time. As it is,

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I can hardly tear myself away from this dear place. I wonder if I shall ever see it again?

PRICHARD REES : Of course, you will. The sooner we start the more certain you are to return.

(The front door bell rings. PRICHARD REES'S smile dies away and he glances uneasily towards the door.)

LILIAN : Who can that be? Go and see, Edmunds.

(EDMUNDS hurries out, L.)

PRICHARD REES : We'd better not wait to see who it is. It may be someone to arrest you. *(Takes her hand.) This way! (Hurries, L.)*

(PRICHARD REES opens door, L., and is confronted by ROWLAND, masked and disguised. He starts back—his hand flies to his sword.)

PRICHARD REES *(angrily)* : What's the meaning of this? Stand aside *(threateningly)* and let us pass.

(LILIAN backs a few steps.)

ROWLAND *(sternly)* : Stand back yourself, and explain what you are doing here with this lady.

PRICHARD REES *(furiously)* : Curse you! get out of my way. *(Drawing his sword.)*

ROWLAND *(drawing his sword)* : Two can play at that game, Citizen Commander. I don't want

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to kill you before you have given me an explanation, but if you insist—

LILIAN (*pale, but determined, steps forward*): Put up your sword, Mr. Rees. There must be no bloodshed here. (*With a muttered oath, PRICHARD REES slams his half-drawn sword into its sheath, steps back, and leaves LILIAN face to face with ROWLAND.*) By what right do you force yourself into Manor Glyn, and demand an explanation from my friend?

ROWLAND: By the right every man has to expose a scoundrel, to stand between him and his victim.

LILIAN: I don't understand what you mean. This gentleman is my friend. There must be some mistake.

ROWLAND: There is—a mistake, on your part. This man is no friend of yours. He stole the papers from your safe and used them to bring your brother to the scaffold. He attempted to lure Colonel Cradoc and his friends into a trap—to destroy them.

PRICHARD REES (*breaks in*): You are mad. I'll not listen to you. (*Makes an attempt to escape by door, R.*)

LILIAN (*imperiously*): Come back, Mr. Rees. We must get to the end of this.

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PRICHARD REES (*shrugs his shoulders—turns back slowly*) : Oh, if you wish it, certainly. (*Bites his nails.*)

LILIAN (*earnestly to ROWLAND*) : I implore you to tell me the truth. Has Sir Charles Lloyd escaped ?

ROWLAND : Yes—he escaped two hours before the time fixed for his execution.

PRICHARD REES (*forgets himself for a moment—betrays surprise*) : Sir Charles escaped ! Is this another lie ?

LILIAN (*darts a startled, suspicious glance at PRICHARD REES*) : You seem surprised. Why should you be surprised if you planned his escape ?

PRICHARD REES (*stammers*) : Surprised ? No, yes—I am surprised. I had hoped it wouldn't have leaked out so soon. If they find out my share in the business I shall be arrested and unable to help you.

ROWLAND (*sternly*) : Your share in the business was to hurry on Sir Charles's execution, make his escape impossible, and get this lady into your power—

PRICHARD REES : It's a lie !

LILIAN (*with a long searching look at ROWLAND*) : If I could see your face I should know if you were telling me the truth. I have known Mr. Rees all

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my life. You are a stranger. Why should I accept your word and not his?

ROWLAND : May not a stranger be an honourable man, and an acquaintance a scoundrel?

LILIAN : I want proof, not words.

ROWLAND : You shall have it. That man carries proof of his treachery on his person. I challenge him to turn out his pockets.

PRICHARD REES : I'll not submit to such an indignity. My conscience is clear. That's enough for me.

LILIAN : You refuse?

PRICHARD REES : I do.

LILIAN : You know what I must think of such a refusal?

PRICHARD REES : I can't help that. If you choose to misjudge me, you must.

LILIAN (*coldly*) : Very well. (*She turns to ROWLAND.*) Will you come with me? I should like to talk with you further. (*Moving, R.*)

(*ROWLAND bows and turns to follow her. Suddenly, as soon as ROWLAND'S eyes are off him, PRICHARD REES stealthily draws his sword, makes one swift step forward, and is in the act of striking, when LILIAN turns her head and screams out a warning. PRICHARD REES, distracted by the cry, succeeds only in wounding ROWLAND in the arm instead of treacherously killing him.*)

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ROWLAND (*jumps back—quickly draws his sword*) : Ha ! I should have known you better than to trust you behind my back.

(PRICHARD REES *backs towards door, L. He reaches the door just as EDMUNDS enters.*)

LILIAN : Shut that door, Edmunds, and don't let that man (*makes a gesture towards PRICHARD REES*) pass.

(EDMUNDS *shuts the door and stands guard, his right hand stealing into his pocket for his revolver.*

(PRICHARD REES *pauses, looking all ways with quick, furtive eyes for a way of escape, gripping his sword with nervous fingers.*)

LILIAN (*crosses swiftly to ROWLAND*) : Are you much hurt ?

ROWLAND : Just a scratch.

LILIAN (*with a quick glance at his arm*) : You are bleeding.

(LILIAN *takes a white handkerchief from her pocket and ties it round ROWLAND'S arm. Blood stains ooze through it. While she is doing this, PRICHARD REES, with a cry of baffled rage, rushes at EDMUNDS. EDMUNDS whips his revolver from his pocket and levels it at PRICHARD, who jerks himself back and throws muttered curses at EDMUNDS.*)

ROWLAND : Thank you, Miss Lloyd. Will you leave us ? I have got to settle accounts with this man.

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LILIAN : I am a soldier's daughter, and I'll see the end of it. (*Retires to the end of the room.* ROWLAND bows gravely.)

ROWLAND (*turns to PRICHARD REES—takes a step towards him, his sword gripped firmly*) : Now, Citizen Rees, I want that paper you have got in your pocket, and the key of the safe. Will you give them up, or shall I take them by force ?

PRICHARD REES : I haven't got them—I swear I haven't got them.

ROWLAND : Your oath is no use to me. Turn out your pockets, or defend yourself.

(*For a moment PRICHARD REES hesitates, and then suddenly attacks ROWLAND. They are both expert swordsmen and engage in a deadly duel. LILIAN watches them with bated breath and fascinated eyes, following every movement with fearful interest. EDMUNDS looks on in an ecstasy of excitement, and cuts and thrusts with an imaginary sword at an imaginary foe. The duel proceeds with varying fortune for some minutes. PRICHARD REES at length shows signs of weakening, and begins to give ground, but is followed relentlessly by ROWLAND, who, with a sudden movement of his arm, twists the sword out of PRICHARD REES'S hand, leaving him defenceless, panting, trembling. ROWLAND draws back his sword as if about to plunge it through PRICHARD REES'S body.*)

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PRICHARD REES (*his knees give way—he drops on to the floor and throws up his hands*) : My God ! Don't kill me. You shall have the paper.

(ROWLAND *lowers his sword. With a trembling hand* PRICHARD REES *takes a paper from his breast pocket and hands it to* ROWLAND.)

ROWLAND : Now—the key.

PRICHARD REES : I—I gave it to Sir Charles.

ROWLAND (*sternly, slowly raising his sword*) : You had better find it. It's the price of your life.

PRICHARD REES (*fumbling in his pocket, finds the key—hands it to* ROWLAND) : I forgot. I meant to give it to him.

ROWLAND (*hands the key to* LILIAN) : Is that the key of your safe ?

LILIAN : Yes.

ROWLAND (*hands paper to* LILIAN) : Look at that, and tell me what it is.

LILIAN (*runs her eyes quickly over the paper*) : Oh ! (*Turns pale—falters.*) It's the list of names of my brother's friends—of the men who—Oh ! and he stole it—to betray them.

ROWLAND : Yes.

LILIAN (*shudders as she turns her eyes for a moment to look at* PRICHARD REES) : And he pretended to be my friend ! My friend !

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EDMUNDS (*shuffles towards PRICHARD REES, with blazing eyes*): You—you—scoundrel! (*Raises his revolver.*)

ROWLAND (*steps quickly between EDMUNDS and PRICHARD REES*): I am sorry, Edmunds, to disappoint you, but, by the rules of war, this man is my prisoner, and I can't hand him over to you—while you have got that weapon in your hand.

EDMUNDS (*sighs—drops the revolver into his pocket*): I am sorry, sir. He told me to keep my powder dry. (*Backs a step or two—his eyes fixed regretfully on PRICHARD REES.*)

ROWLAND (*to LILIAN*): I think you had better destroy that paper. In these dangerous times fortune changes in the flash of an eye, and no one knows what may happen from one minute to another.

LILIAN: You are right. (*Tears up the paper and throws the fragments into the fire.*)

ROWLAND: And the key? You won't be safe while you carry it on your person.

EDMUNDS: Give it to me, Miss Lilian. I'll take care of it. They won't tackle an old Lancer in a hurry.

(*Heavy footsteps are heard approaching off, L., and the next moment the door is pushed open, and JOHN ROBERTS strides into the room, leaving two armed Guards at the door.*)

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JOHN ROBERTS : Aristocratic company, Citizen Commander ! Have you spent the night with this fine lady ?

LILIAN (*confronts JOHN ROBERTS with a flush of indignation*) : How dare you ! If my brother were here—

JOHN ROBERTS (*breaks in*) : He isn't here ? Then where is he ?

LILIAN (*haughtily*) : I don't know, and if I did I wouldn't tell you.

JOHN ROBERTS (*grimly*) : We shall see about that.

LILIAN : Your threats won't frighten me.

JOHN ROBERTS : No ? We shall find a way to make you speak. Guards ! arrest this woman.

ROWLAND (*steps between LILIAN and the advancing Guards*) : Touch this lady at your peril !

(*The Guards hesitate.*)

JOHN ROBERTS (*with a hoarse laugh*) : You crow loudly, young man. (*To PRICHARD REES.*) Who is this fellow ?

PRICHARD REES : The Unseen Hand, the man who laughs at your power, the man who rescues traitors from the executioners, the man who, by some devil's cunning all his own, brought about Citizen Lloyd's escape and upset my plans to ambush Cradoc and his party.

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JOHN ROBERTS (*regarding ROWLAND intently*) : So, the pitcher has gone to the well once too often. Your offences cry aloud for punishment. Take off that mask, and let us see the face of the man who has dared so much for the enemies of the Revolution.

ROWLAND (*with a laugh*) : I'll take it off when I please, not at your bidding.

JOHN ROBERTS : What! You defy me ? (*Takes a swift step towards ROWLAND, and thrusts out his hand to tear off his mask.*)

ROWLAND (*steps back, grips his sword threateningly*) : Take care ! (JOHN ROBERTS, *thunder-struck by ROWLAND'S audacity, pulls up with a jerk.*) I don't want your blood upon my head. Be warned, and don't try me too far. Your orders are your own : they have no legal force. I am ready to submit to the judgment of my peers, to any just sentence, but I'll not submit to your violence before I am tried. My identity shall neither favour nor prejudice me. Justice has to do with acts, not with persons.

LILIAN : Oh, if everyone had your courage, the people would soon raise their heads and win back their liberty.

JOHN ROBERTS (*steps back slowly—impressed*) : It's a pity you don't use your courage in a better cause. The Revolution, the foundation of liberty, has need of the strong arm of strong men. You

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are wasting yourself on a lost cause. Look forward, man. Come over to us, and the future is yours. Look back, and you will stagnate in the ranks of our doomed enemies. You might as well throw yourself on to a refuse heap and rot as try to breathe life into a dead Monarchy.

ROWLAND : Come over to you—join your armed bands of outlaws and robbers? No! not for any bribe you can offer me.

JOHN ROBERTS : The acts of a Government are the outcome of the acts of its enemies. They are responsible, not we who suit the sentence to the crime.

ROWLAND : Your enemies are of your own making. Do you ever give them a chance to be your friends? What place is there for decent men amongst the wretches who burn and pillage towns and villages, persecute inoffensive men and women, and make a mock of law and order? Your policy is based on hatred of the best of your fellow creatures, you have set fathers against their sons, hounded on the vicious to prey upon the helpless, until one man's hand is raised against another, and peace has vanished from the land. God Almighty never meant humanity to sink to such depths.

JOHN ROBERTS (*buried in frowning thought, compelled to listen against his will—rouses himself as ROWLAND stops speaking*) : Enough—enough!

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I respect courage in every man, and that is why I have listened to you. (*Turns away in gloomy thought, walks slowly across the room, comes back to ROWLAND, his eyes searching him from head to foot. Shakes his head.*) There's something about you—I don't understand. (*Abruptly, after a pause.*) In the name of God! Who are you?

PRICHARD REES (*before ROWLAND can answer*): The Unseen Hand. If I had any doubt before, I have none now. Take care you don't succumb to his wiles as others have done. For every man he has a weapon in his armoury to overthrow reason and justify treason. He tried it on me, but failed, and then attacked me treacherously, and would have murdered me but for your timely arrival.

LILIAN (*facing PRICHARD REES with flashing eyes*): You pitiful coward! It was you who wounded him treacherously in the arm. I saw you do it, and, if I hadn't warned him, you would have killed him.

JOHN ROBERTS: It may be as you say. The tools of the Revolution are not all made of tempered steel, but they serve their purpose. It takes a thief to catch a thief.

PRICHARD REES: Do you mean that for me?

JOHN ROBERTS: Tush! man, if the cap fits you, put it on in the devil's name. (*To ROWLAND.*) As to you, you admit you are an enemy of the

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Revolution, and side with the exploiters of the people. Such an attitude breeds its own Nemesis. The people rend those who have kept them in bondage.

ROWLAND : There was no bondage, but there is now. What you call liberty is nothing but a snare, and a man has to choose between bondage or death. The voice of God calls aloud to you in the miseries of the people, and demands reparation for the wrongs you have done.

JOHN ROBERTS : Stop ! I'll not listen to you.

ROWLAND : Won't you ? I gave you credit for courage, but I see you are afraid of the truth.

JOHN ROBERTS : The truth is as complex as a man's conscience. The composite conscience of the crowd is in no man's control—unless you arrogate to yourself the right to regulate the conscience of the world.

ROWLAND : You put it well ! The Revolution has no conscience. It is no wonder that it is unconscious of its hideous mistakes, its bloody crimes.

JOHN ROBERTS : The Revolution that succeeds is placed above mistakes. It knows no remorse nor regrets. It sweeps into oblivion the old order, sets upon its grave the black flag of Slavery, and creates a new order under the red flag of freedom.

ROWLAND (*vehemently*) : Freedom ? You don't know what the word means. There is no Freedom

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where there is no restraint. Independence can't exist under the shadow of violence. Your freedom is a mockery of liberty. It ends in a wilderness and leaves nothing but wreckage in its wake. Freedom ! Your ideals of freedom work themselves out in savage lawlessness and unbridled egotism, and never fail to provoke reaction.

JOHN ROBERTS : Your eloquence might carry away a weaker man, and drop him into waters beyond his depth, but not me. Let me tell you, the iron laws of yesterday are not wanted for the man of to-day.

ROWLAND : What we see around is proof to the contrary. He can't govern himself, nor will he submit to be governed. Isn't that chaos ? The laws of Nature forbid equality amongst individuals, and until they are altered by the God who made them your system is impossible.

JOHN ROBERTS : There is equality enough for a working basis.

ROWLAND : Is there equality between individuals in this room ?

JOHN ROBERTS : Universal equality has been established by the Revolution.

ROWLAND : If that is so, I am at liberty to follow my own inclination. Ah ! but directly my ideas clash with yours you fly at my throat.

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What a fine commentary upon the fraternal creed, preached by your Apostles of Liberty!

JOHN ROBERTS (*ironically*): Go on—go on! Pour it all out, and see where it will land you.

ROWLAND: I'm under no illusion as to that. You have fastened your claws into me, as you fasten the fetters on to others and strike them off yourself. You let loose riots and red fury, and cheer on the mad crowd until they are intoxicated with their own excesses and don't know what they are doing. (*A pause.*) The arrogance of power stalks like a spectre through the land, leaving widespread pestilence and famine. Persecutions and executions will leave a record written in letters of blood on the tombstone of the Revolution.

PRICHARD REES: What did I tell you? Let this fellow loose amongst the people, and he'll be a red-hot danger to the Government.

LILIAN: So the persecutors said of old when they feared the Saviour. Those who feared to lose office crucified Him. But did it profit them? Like you, they refused to open their eyes to the light, and they lost their inheritance.

JOHN ROBERTS (*impatiently*): Tush! girl, don't think to influence me by such old superstitions. Treason and the Testament are a bad mixture, and I'm not going to swallow it. You—both of you—have dared to conspire against the Government—

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ROWLAND (*breaks in*): You can't conspire against a bad dream.

JOHN ROBERTS (*violently*): Silence! Your crimes are plentiful enough without adding to them.

ROWLAND: Is it a crime to plead for human discipline—for order and stability—for the penal laws which restrain and punish wrongdoers; for the moral laws which the wisdom of ages has enshrined in the conscience of civilised man? If you say there is treason in this, for which I must die, then I am prepared to die. Liberty as I understand it is worth dying for. Liberty as you understand it is not worth living for.

(ROWLAND closes his lips and stands erect, awaiting his sentence, one hand resting on the table. JOHN ROBERTS walks slowly across the room, his attitude betraying a disquieted mind, tossed about on baffling emotions. LILIAN watches him with haggard eyes, her hands clasped tightly in an agony of suspense. Her eyes stray to ROWLAND, and his calm, fearless attitude seems to inspire her with new courage. She crosses to him. EDMUNDS crosses to LILIAN and stands by her like a faithful dog.)

PRICHARD REES (*follows JOHN ROBERTS, touches him on the shoulder*): If this man is set free, all the enemies of the Revolution—Citizen Lloyd, Cradoc, and the rest—must be set free.

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They are all guilty or all innocent, and you must acquit all or condemn all.

JOHN ROBERTS (*rouses himself, throws off his indecision*): You are right, Citizen Commander. I had a moment's weakness—a strange weakness—but it's passed. (*Sternly.*) They must pay the penalty. (*To LILIAN.*) Have you anything to say why sentence of death should not be——

(EDMUNDS, *very upset, appeals to LILIAN dumbly, fingers the revolver in his pocket. She restrains him.*)

PRICHARD REES (*hastily interposing*): Let her remain here in my custody. Sooner or later, she will draw other traitors into the net, and we shall have them.

JOHN ROBERTS: Yes, that's wisely thought of.

LILIAN (*wildly*): No—no! anything but that. I would rather suffer death than be left in that man's power.

JOHN ROBERTS: We are not making arrangements for your pleasure, Citizeness. Your views need a little correction, and you will find Citizen Rees an excellent schoolmaster. 'Pon my life! I've a mind to wed you to him. He's hungry for the fat lands of Manor Glyn, and a cross in the blood might breed worthy citizens. (ROWLAND *chafes like a greyhound held in the leash and can barely restrain himself. To ROWLAND.*) Hold

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yourself in hand, Citizen. The place is surrounded by my Guards. (*Shows whistle.*) I have only got to blow this whistle and you and the Citizeness would be in rougher hands than mine. (ROWLAND'S *tension suddenly relaxes.*) Ah ! I see you understand.

ROWLAND : Yes, God help me ! I understand. It is not your Guards that I fear, nor that dishonoured man by your side, but you (*his voice falls—vibrates with emotion*), you—being who you are—I dare not strike.

JOHN ROBERTS (*jeeringly*) : A little wholesome fear of the President—what ?

ROWLAND (*with a passionate gesture—throwing out his hand towards PRICHARD REES*) : Let that man repeat your words, and you'll see how much I am restrained by fear.

(*All eyes are turned upon PRICHARD REES, who turns pale, bites his lips, and remains silent.*)

JOHN ROBERTS : Enough of this ! My officers have other duties than fighting duels with traitors. To-morrow morning at eight o'clock you will be executed at the Stone Cross in the Manor grounds. Until then, Citizeness, since you have no servants, you will wait upon the condemned man, and, watching his last moments on earth, take a lesson from his fate. Come, Citizen Commander, and leave the Citizeness in peace for to-night. (*Turns at the door.*) Remember, the place is surrounded.

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(JOHN ROBERTS, PRICHARD REES, *and the two Guards at the door go out, L., and close the door after them.*)

EDMUNDS (*trembling violently, in a choking voice*): Oh, Miss Lilian, it was cruel not to let me shoot him. I—I wish the sandwiches had choked him, that I do. (*Totters into a chair overcome.*)

(LILIAN *silently comforts the old man.*)

ROWLAND (*with a grave smile*): Cheer up, my friend. All's not lost yet.

EDMUNDS (*raises his head quickly—fixes his eyes on ROWLAND*): That's the right spirit, sir. It's what the young master would have said. A little lion he was when he was in petticoats, and a great gentleman always.

(LILIAN *walks away from them, too profoundly moved to listen or speak.*)

ROWLAND (*rests his hand kindly on the old man's shoulder*): There are other gentlemen, Edmunds, besides those born in the purple. A time like this sorts out those who are Nature's best, and they are sometimes found amongst (*looks down at EDMUNDS with a smile*) old Lancers.

EDMUNDS: Bless you, sir, I had a purple p'leece once, so I can't take no credit for bein' what I am. (*In an eager whisper.*) Cheer her up, sir—cheer her up! I'm only talking this sort of nonsense to help her. (*With sudden recollection of*

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LILIAN'S *position*.) Oh, my God! my God! what will they do to her? (*Bows his head in his hands.*)

ROWLAND (*crosses to LILIAN*): That old man has a wonderful love for you. What a fine old fellow he is! He wants you to hold your head up and not allow things to distress you too much.

LILIAN (*in a stifled voice*): I can't—I can't! I think my heart will break. (*Looks at ROWLAND piteously.*) You have been brought to this through me. You risked your life to warn me, and—and—I can't bear it.

ROWLAND (*deeply moved*): It was no fault of yours. You mustn't grieve. A long life or a short life—what does it matter? What matters is whether you have spent it in honourable service or not. In trying to serve you I have served myself. My one regret is that I came too late.

LILIAN (*clutches his arm in her eagerness and terror*): But you must escape—there must be a way!

ROWLAND: There is no way for me, but there is for you.

LILIAN: I daren't leave you, it would be cowardly.

ROWLAND: Brave heart! Then you shall stay and yet be safe from the man you fear.

LILIAN: How is that possible (*in a low, trembling voice*) when you are—gone?

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ROWLAND : You shall be safe—I promise you. Won't you trust me without an explanation ?

LILIAN : Oh, yes, I will always trust you.

ROWLAND : Thank you for saying that. I am going to test your trust. Now I want you to do me a favour.

LILIAN (*looks up into his face and whispers*) : Anything, anything !

ROWLAND (*gazing down into her upturned face*) : Then I want you to go and rest.

(LILIAN bows her head—she turns away slowly—afraid to trust herself to speak. ROWLAND watches her with intense longing. At the door she turns and regards him with a sweet, serious smile, then, with a deep sigh, goes out, R. ROWLAND crosses to EDMUNDS, who rises at his approach.)

ROWLAND (*gravely*) : There is one service you can do your mistress. Will you do it ?

EDMUNDS : I will give my life for Miss Lilian.

ROWLAND : Ah ! you may have to give it. She must be saved from Prichard Rees. When he is about, watch over her—never leave her out of your sight. Be always ready. If he molests her, shoot him !

CURTAIN.

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ACT IV.

SCENE 1.

The Following Morning.

[SCENE.—*The same as in Act III. The first streak of dawn creeps in through the window and mingles with the fitful light from a log fire. ROWLAND is lying down on some rugs on the floor, a little distance from the hearth, asleep. Door R. is pushed open by a nervous hand, and LILIAN comes in, her eyes fixed earnestly, watchfully, on the sleeping man. Assuring herself that he sleeps, she moves noiselessly towards him, a lighted candle in her hand, and bends over him with a great and tender pity. Reluctantly she turns away and softly crosses to the window, closes the shutters, and then glides back to ROWLAND, her eyes fixed on a glittering object in his open hand. She stoops cautiously and takes it from his hand, and, holding it close to the light, gazes at it wonderingly.*]

LILIAN (*murmurs to herself*): My miniature !
(*She attempts to move his mask—to steal a glance at his face. He stirs in his sleep. She hastily rises and secretes the miniature in her bosom.*)

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ROWLAND (*opens his eyes, sees LILIAN, raises himself upon his elbow*): Is it—is it? (*Sighs, closes his eyes.*) No—it is a dream.

LILIAN (*softly*): No—it is I—Lilian.

ROWLAND (*raising himself slowly, his eyes fixed upon her face*): I was dreaming about you. When I saw you standing there—I thought—it couldn't be you—that my fancy cheated me.

LILIAN (*brokenly*): I couldn't rest. I waited until the lark warned me that 'twas morning—such a sweet song to awake one to the horror of to-day. The thought tortured me. I had to come.

ROWLAND: You are very kind to me. You help me to face the dawn. It is always the dawn that opens a new day—a new life—sometimes a new hope. But you might have spared yourself, and sent a servant to call me. You have suffered enough.

LILIAN: I have no servants—all have been taken from me but Edmunds, and he is sleeping. I hadn't the heart to wake him.

ROWLAND: You are alone?

LILIAN: Yes.

ROWLAND: Then we share the solitude of the world. It is another tie between us—if I may dare to say so.

LILIAN (*tries to smile*): Yes; but my lot is happiness compared with yours. (*A pause.*) I

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have been thinking—thinking all night—trying to plan some way of escape, but I can't, I can't.

ROWLAND (*leads LILIAN silently to the window, opens the shutters, points out. Sentries are seen pacing to and fro*): Look! There is no way of escape. The place is surrounded.

LILIAN: Oh, there must be a way—there must! God won't let them—let them (*for a moment she is too distressed to put her thought into words*)—let them commit such a crime.

ROWLAND: I'm afraid miracles are not wasted on one man's destiny. God's power in Heaven may be great, but man's power on earth goes on undirected. unchecked! Don't think me ungrateful. But is the life we are compelled to lead worth while? In this, room with you, there is more liberty and happiness than in all the world outside. Here, I feel I can unburden my soul, and not be mocked at. There, I am brought face to face with the ugliness of life, helpless to make things better. (*Paces the room restlessly, his mind a prey to chasing thoughts.*) I dreamt of a Government without reproach, and I helped to create a Government which shames humanity.

LILIAN: But you didn't know.

ROWLAND: No—I didn't know! But is ignorance an excuse for folly?

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LILIAN : You believed that others were as honest as yourself. That was your mistake and your justification.

ROWLAND : You are very tender to my faults (*shakes his head slowly*) ; but your generosity can not undo what has been done. My ideals have been shattered by my father's hand.

LILIAN (*startled, stares at ROWLAND, frightened and amazed*) : You—you—the President's son !

ROWLAND (*pulls off his mask*) : Yes—I am Rowland Roberts, the despised son of an execrated man.

LILIAN (*in a shuddering whisper*) : And he—your father—has sentenced you to death. O, God !

ROWLAND (*bows his head—a painful pause*) : He would call it impartial justice. (*Suddenly seems to remember something—searches his pockets—looks about the floor anxiously.*)

LILIAN : What are you looking for ?

ROWLAND : I have lost something—something I greatly valued.

LILIAN : What was it—that you should value it so much ?

ROWLAND : It was a gift from your brother, given me under strange circumstances.

LILIAN : Ah ! then I understand it all now. (*Her expression softening—a wonderful new light in her eyes.*) You were his unknown friend.

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It was you who helped him to escape. (*Offers him miniature.*) It was in your hand while you slept. I didn't know you had any right to it. Take it.

ROWLAND: Since you give it to me it is doubly precious. (*Takes the miniature—touches it with his lips.*) It almost makes me wish to live.

LILIAN: Is it nothing to you that I want you to live?

ROWLAND: You say that from compassion. I do not want compassion. I want all that a woman has to give. You cannot give me that!

LILIAN: You gave your life for me and my brother—braved hatred and vengeance for our sakes. Do you think I would be less generous?

ROWLAND: Generosity, beautiful as it is, is not love. See how exacting a man can be who has but a few hours to live. Those hours are so precious, that they covet the most precious gift or—nothing.

LILIAN: Can such a debt as mine be met with anything less than all?

(ROWLAND looks at her, reads the wonderful story of her love in her eyes, and, in the ecstasy of the moment, forgetting his desperate position, takes her rapturously in his arms.

(Suddenly there is loud knocking at door, L.)

A VOICE (*off L.*): In there! Open the door!

LILIAN (*clings tremblingly to ROWLAND*): They have come for you.

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ROWLAND (*quickly replaces his mask*): They shall find me ready. (*Unsheaths his sword.*)

LILIAN (*piteously*): Oh, Rowland, what are you going to do?

ROWLAND: I'm going to fight for my life. It has become too precious to be thrown away without a struggle.

(EDMUNDS, *panting with excitement, bursts into the room, R.*)

EDMUNDS (*almost incoherently*): Miss—Miss Lilian—the clock! (*Drops on to his knees by the clock.*) And I—never remembered! (*Fumbling at the carpet with trembling fingers—pulls it away from the floor about the clock.*) Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!

LILIAN (*hurrying with ROWLAND to EDMUNDS*): What is it, Edmunds?

(*Repeated knocking at door, L., and trampling of feet.*)

EDMUNDS: I—I've found a way out. I remembered it suddenly when I woke. The old General told me about it sixty years ago. A secret way. Look! Miss Lilian (*touches a spring in the floor, the clock revolves, and reveals a trap door and secret staircase*). Here 'tis! Just as the old master said, and steps going down to an underground passage into the dingle.

A LOUD VOICE (*off, L.*): In the name of the Republic, open! or we'll force the door.

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EDMUNDS (*points down*): This way, sir—quick! It's death or glory outside, but it's death in here.

LILIAN (*terrified*): Oh, go—go!

ROWLAND (*grips EDMUNDS'S hand*): I shan't forget! (*To LILIAN.*) Courage, dear heart! (*Smiling at her.*) The miracle has happened. I would take you with me, but you are safer here. (*With one foot on the secret stairs—to EDMUNDS.*) Remember your promise.

EDMUNDS: I will, sir, never fear.

(*Furious hammering at the door.*)

ROWLAND (*smiling*): That sounds like notice to quit.

(*ROWLAND embraces LILIAN and quickly disappears down the stairs. EDMUNDS sets the clock back in its place and then opens door, L. TOM JAMES and SAM WATKINS enter.*)

TOM (*stops suddenly and looks about him with amazement*): By gosh! Sam, this is a rum go. (*To EDMUNDS.*) In the name of goodness, where is the prisoner?

(*EDMUNDS shakes his head.*)

SAM: The old gentleman is deaf, perhaps. (*Shouts in EDMUNDS'S ear.*) Hoi! mun—can't you hear? Where is the prisoner? (*EDMUNDS points to his ears—shakes his head.*) He is deaf, right enough.

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TOM : It stands to reason he must be somewhere : but where is he ? That is the question !

SAM : So far as I can see, he is not here, whatever. Perhaps the young lady can tell us.

LILIAN : Are you the executioners ?

TOM : No, thank goodness ! That is the job of skilled workmen. Me and Sam are only dilutees. We have got no delight in executions. I have never killed a man in my life—so far, but I have killed hundreds in my bragging, and Sam has killed thousands. Haven't you, Sam ?

SAM (*with a grin*) : Aie, when I have had a couple of pints or the nightmare.

TOM : If we are going to talk private, like this, Sam, you had better shut the door. (SAM *nods and shuts door, L.*) We don't want those fellows outside to listen.

LILIAN : You seem two kind-hearted men.

TOM : We ought to be, indeed. I was a member of Carmel before I took on this job—by compulsion ; and Sam played " forward " for Treorchy. I wish I was back in the Rhondda cutting coal, and not running after poor fellows to hang them. It is an awful strain.

SAM : Yes—for them, poor fellows. I am awful sorry for them. When we catch them, I say to myself—Suppose I was in their place ?

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LILIAN (*eagerly*): Yes—if you were in their place, what would you do?

SAM: Ask them to let me go, to be sure.

LILIAN: Do you ever let prisoners go?

SAM (*looks doubtfully at LILIAN, and then questioningly at TOM*): What do you say, Tom? My memory is awful bad.

TOM: Well, to tell the truth, we do and we don't. But I will say this: We are more joyful when we can help them to slip off than we are to push them into the pit.

LILIAN: Oh, I knew you were two good men the moment I saw you. You must be glad that your prisoner has escaped.

TOM: If I must be glad, of course, I can't help it.

SAM: It stands to reason. At the same time, it will be all up with us, Tom, if we tell the President he has given us the slip.

LILIAN: But why should you tell him? Why not let him think the sentence has been carried out? If you tell the truth, you will be punished—unjustly. Oh, listen to your hearts, and give the prisoner time to reach a place of safety.

TOM (*thoughtfully*): We might do it, but it would be awful dangerous.

SAM (*with a reckless laugh*): What odds about that? For a few pints of beer we can get a certificate from the "stretch-necks," and there you are.

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By gosh ! it will be a treat to play off a joke on the old President.

TOM : We'll do it, Sam. (*Suspiciously—to LILIAN.*) But, perhaps you will split on us, and where shall we be then ?

SAM : Up a tree, for a sure fact.

LILIAN (*earnestly*) : Indeed, indeed, I wouldn't do that. Isn't the life of such a man worth saving ?

TOM (*with a searching glance*) : Do you know him ?

LILIAN : Yes. His life is very dear to me.

TOM : You swear you won't betray us ?

LILIAN : Oh, yes, a thousand times yes.

TOM : I believe you. Stand by the door, Sam. (*He straightens himself and drops his assumed collier manner. SAM stands guard at the door.*) We are Rowland's devoted friends, Miss Lloyd. He is our chief, and we are only servants of the Revolution, that we may be the better able to help its victims. It's a strange chance that sent us here to drag our chief to execution.

SAM : Providence, mum—that's what it is—not chance. But we never would have done it, Tom.

TOM : No—we'd have found a way to baffle those waiting devils outside. (*A thoughtful pause.*) Yes, we'll let the President think the sentence has been carried out. The knowledge that he has executed his own son may make him more human—

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more merciful to others. He deserves it, my God ! he deserves it. Great things are about to happen, Miss Lloyd. The hour has struck. Thank God ! Rowland and Sir Charles are free to lead the fight for freedom. Come, Sam. We have got to play our parts, too. (*With SAM at door, L.*) Have no fear for our chief, Miss Lloyd. You can rely on us.

LILIAN : I shall pray for your success.

TOM : And we'll fight for you. God keep you until the fight is over. (*Resumes his assumed character.*)

SAM (*as he is passing* EDMUNDS) : Are you deaf still, old gentleman ?

EDMUNDS : Thank you—my hearing has much improved.

SAM (*with a chuckle*) : You must have wonderful drops for your ears. I'd like to have the receipt.

EDMUNDS : With pleasure. One drop of invention and two drops of necessity. (*In a confidential whisper.*) Got it ?

SAM (*laughs boisterously*) : I'll remember ! Lock the door after us.

(*TOM and SAM hurry out, L., EDMUNDS bolts the door.*)

END OF SCENE.

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SCENE 2.

Three Hours Later.

[SCENE.—*The Revolutionary Council Chamber. As the curtain rises, JOHN ROBERTS comes in, sits down at the head of the table, and reads reports. In a few minutes PRICHARD REES enters, carrying a blue document in his hand. TOM and SAM take up their post at the door, their eyes fixed on JOHN ROBERTS.*]

JOHN ROBERTS (*notices document in PRICHARD REES'S hand*): What's that you've got?

PRICHARD REES: The executioner's report. (*Hands document to JOHN ROBERTS, watches him with furtive, side-long glances as he runs his eyes over it.*)

JOHN ROBERTS: How many were executed this morning?

PRICHARD REES: Twenty-seven, I believe.

JOHN ROBERTS: Ah! Twenty-seven enemies of the Revolution the less. (*Reads on. Suddenly starts—stares with strained eyes at the paper, which shakes in his hand.*) Rowland Roberts? Who—who is he?

PRICHARD REES: The man you sentenced at Manor Glyn, the Unseen Hand, the plague of the Revolution.

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JOHN ROBERTS: But the name—Rowland Roberts—my son's name! Tell me—who was this man? (PRICHARD REES *hesitates*. JOHN ROBERTS *jumps to his feet, seizes PRICHARD REES's arm in a grip of iron.*) Curse you, man, can't you speak?

PRICHARD REES (*flurried*): I thought you knew.

JOHN ROBERTS (*with dread*): My God! it wasn't Rowland?

PRICHARD REES: Yes—it was Rowland—your son.

JOHN ROBERTS (*overwhelmed—cannot speak for several moments*): And I never knew. (*Fiercely.*) But you knew, and didn't utter a word to warn me, not a word to give me a chance to think, to stay my hand!

PRICHARD ROBERTS: Why should I? How was I to know you'd a different kind of justice for your family and other criminals? Haven't you always boasted of your impartial justice, even threatened Rowland with death if he weakened in his duty to the Republic? Was I to suppose that your professions were a pretence? If they were, what would the people say of you if they knew?

JOHN REES (*confused—stares about in a dazed way*): That is true. Principles are sometimes hard taskmasters. (*Paces the room slowly, thinking*

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aloud.) My pride, my ambition, all I cared for in life were centred in that boy. I hoped to see him great in the counsels of the Nation. I laboured and saved for him, trained his mind to grapple with great human schemes, and now—(*dashes his hand fiercely across his eyes*). My God! I have killed him. (*Collapses into a chair, but fights fiercely to throw off his weakness.*)

PRICHARD REES : Don't blame yourself. You only did your duty. He died a traitor to his country.

JOHN ROBERTS (*staggers to his feet, turns passionately to PRICHARD REES*) : Take care! I'm in no mood to listen to your taunts. (*He falls into a profound silence, his hands and lips tremble, and then he mutters to himself aloud.*) I didn't know—I didn't know. It was done in ignorance. It was not I who killed him.

PRICHARD REES : No, it was not you. It was that girl at Manor Glyn. But for her he would have been alive now.

JOHN ROBERTS (*startled*) : How—How! What in hell do you mean?

PRICHARD REES : I mean that she used her beauty to lure him to his knees—betrayed him by a Judas kiss—fooled him by wanton smiles, and laughed at him after he had served her purpose.

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JOHN ROBERTS : My God ! and I threw him to the executioners like a dog. But she shall rue the day she dared to come between Rowland and his duty. She and her people shall know what it is to slight a son of the people.

PRICHARD REES : Your son. Don't forget that.

JOHN ROBERTS (*throws out his hands yearningly*) : My son !

(PRICHARD REES *listens with secret glee, barely able to conceal his satisfaction, while JOHN ROBERTS heavily paces the room, shaken with emotion. Suddenly he pauses before PRICHARD REES and fixes his burning eyes upon him.*)

JOHN ROBERTS : Go to Manor Glyn. Make that wanton suffer as she has made me suffer. Make her feel what it is to lose her station and wealth and taste the bitterness of degradation. Drag her beauty, her pride down into the dust. Let her life be spared that she may endure these things. Go ! (*Points to the door.*)

(PRICHARD REES *goes out quickly. JOHN ROBERTS, exhausted by his outburst of passion, stands very still, his eyes staring into vacancy, the twitching of his face and the nervous clasping and unclasping of his hands betraying the agony of soul he is enduring under the accusing questionings of his mind. After awhile, he makes an effort to master himself, turns*

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a haggard face towards the door, and looks fixedly at TOM and beckons to him to approach. TOM comes in and stands before the President.)

JOHN ROBERTS: You were a friend of my son?

TOM: Yes, indeed, in a respectful way.

JOHN ROBERTS: You saw him—(*pauses*)—saw him die?

TOM: I was one of them sent to fetch him from Manor Glyn.

JOHN ROBERTS: Did he say—did he send any message?

TOM: Not by me. I didn't hear nothing about it from the executioners, neither.

JOHN ROBERTS (*turning away—with clenched hand*): God Almighty! it's hard to bear.

(*TOM creeps back to SAM. A great noise, as of an excited crowd, arises outside. JOHN ROBERTS raises his head sharply to listen.*)

JOHN ROBERTS (*to TOM*): What's that noise out there?

TOM: I don't know—I will go and see. (*Rushes out—re-enters in a few moments.*)

JOHN ROBERTS: What is it?

TOM: A scout has just come in to say that Sir Charles Lloyd and Colonel Cradoc and a big army are advancing towards Manor Glyn. There is a big crowd out there.

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JOHN ROBERTS (*instantly alert*): Ha! How far off are they?

TOM: The scouts say they are near the Old Mill.

JOHN ROBERTS: I know the place—ten miles from Manor Glyn. (*His eyes light up, and his old dominating spirit flashes out as he strides to the door to address the crowd.*) Comrades! The Revolution is in danger. Militarism is daring to raise its head again, to enslave the working classes and make beasts of burden of the people. If you don't want to give back the land to the landlords, the factories and workshops to the capitalists, and power to the Monarchy, you must defend the Revolution to the last drop of your blood. (*Great commotion and savage cheers outside.*) The hour has come to prove your manhood, to show the world that you are worthy of your freedom, and ready to die for it. At such a time, when your future is at stake, mercy is weakness. You must kill your enemies or they will kill you. All to arms! All to the defence of the Revolution. Shoot those who resist. Long live the Revolution! (*The cry is taken up by the crowd outside and is repeated many times.*)

END OF SCENE.

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SCENE 3.

An Hour Later.

[SCENE.—Oak Room at Manor Glyn. LILIAN, partly hidden by a fold of the curtain, is seen watching at the window. Sentries pass to and fro at intervals. In a minute or so, door, L., is silently opened and closed again, and PRICHARD REES creeps in, stops in the middle of the room, and attracts LILIAN'S attention. She is startled and turns sharply and sees him.]

LILIAN : You ! What are you doing here ?

PRICHARD REES : I am commissioned to take possession of Manor Glyn and its charming mistress.

LILIAN : Commissioned by yourself to commit another outrage, to add one more dishonour to your name.

PRICHARD REES : My dear girl, don't let us quarrel. We have to live together, you know. Another turn of Fortune's wheel has brought us back to the old position, only more so.

LILIAN : Will you leave the house, or shall I ring for the servants to put you out ?

PRICHARD REES (*bursts out laughing*) : Ring, by all means—but will they come ?

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LILIAN : You coward ! You know I am alone, or you wouldn't dare to set foot in Manor Glyn and insult me like this.

PRICHARD REES (*mockingly*) : I have come here to cherish you, and make much of you, as becomes an eager lover. Oh, don't frown and stamp your pretty foot. You may provoke me to retaliate, you know, in the true Christian fashion—a kiss for a blow—what ? It would be pleasant to sip the sweets of those scornful lips. You won't speak ? You won't look at me ? How foolish ! I'm afraid you don't understand the situation. Your gallant lover, the Unseen Hand, has paid his account for daring to come between us, and you are going to pay yours. It has been a long time due, and I have been a patient creditor.

LILIAN : You have been—Oh ! but what is the use of reminding a man like you of the things you have done, of the dishonourable means you have used to gain your ends ? If you had one spark of manhood in you you would turn away in shame from Manor Glyn, and not seek to add to the misery of an unfortunate and helpless girl.

PRICHARD REES : My dear girl ! I am here to make you happy, to devote my life to your service. What more can a man do ? I own I have been obliged to act a part, a disagreeable part, in the past. My love for you made me see red when I saw you

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drifting into the arms of another. He and I hated each other—I confess it, but is there anything wrong in that? Every man worth his salt fights for his mate. (LILIAN *puts her hands to her ears and turns from him with a shudder.*) Come! Treat me fairly. Give me a chance to regain your good opinion. What I have done I have done to win you. I swear it. (LILIAN *remains silent. He shows signs of exasperation.*) You refuse to speak? Do you think I am a man to be treated with contempt?

LILIAN (*desperately*): Oh, if my brother were here!

PRICHARD REES (*ironically*): But he is not here, and the whip is in my hands. Will you force me to use it?

(*The sound of distant firing is heard.*)

LILIAN (*starts—cries with joy*): That is my answer—the sound of the guns. I knew they would come.

PRICHARD REES: Oh! you knew they would come. You knew of this insurrection. So you are a rebel like your brother. Do you know that you have delivered yourself into the hands of the executioners?

LILIAN (*recoils with horror*): Oh! No—no! Not that!

PRICHARD REES: I say you have. Your words are a confession. If I carry them to the

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President, you are doomed. Only I stand between you and a shameful death. I want to save you. I will save you—on one condition.

LILIAN (*deathly pale*) : Save me ! Save me ! (*Clasping her hands—pleading pitifully.*) Mercy ! I couldn't bear the shame of it. (*Looks about her with terrified eyes.*) Oh, I have seen them (*points with a trembling hand to the window*) out there—dead—swaying in the moonlight—their bodies stript by thieves. Oh—God ! save me from such a fate as that.

PRICHARD REES : Come, come—you are terrifying yourself for nothing. Consent to be my wife, and I will save you in spite of the President.

LILIAN (*in a low, tense voice*) : Is that the condition ?

PRICHARD REES : Yes.

LILIAN : Then—I refuse. I would rather die than be your wife.

PRICHARD REES : Very well. What you refuse I will take.

(*He takes a hasty step towards her and tries to seize her hand. LILIAN springs away from him, flies towards the bell, crying wildly : " Rowland, save me ! Help ! Help ! "*) She seizes the bell and pulls it violently, just as PRICHARD REES throws his arms about her and pulls her away. She struggles with all her strength. He tries to

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force her head back to kiss her, but is foiled by her struggles. He half carries and half drags her towards door, L.)

LILIAN (*faintly*): What are you going to do with me?

PRICHARD REES: We are going to spend—our honeymoon—across the border.

(*PRICHARD REES gains the door, L., and is about to open it. LILIAN does all she can to prevent him and cries again, in a voice growing weaker, "Help! Help!" Door, R., is thrown open, and EDMUNDS stumbles into the room clutching a revolver. Instantly he steadies himself, and levels the revolver at PRICHARD REES.*)

EDMUNDS: Let her go, or, by God! I'll kill you.

(*Heedless of the warning, PRICHARD REES drags the door open and tries to force LILIAN out. EDMUNDS fires. PRICHARD REES utters a choking cry, throws up his hands, and collapses on the floor.*)

CURTAIN.

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ACT V.

The Next Evening.

[SCENE.—Oak room at Manor Glyn. The setting sun lights up the grounds beyond the window. LILIAN, very pale and troubled, is seated by the ingle-nook, gazing into the fire. EDMUNDS brings in a silver tea-tray, and lays it on a small table.]

EDMUNDS : Tea is laid, if you please, Miss Lilian.

LILIAN (*rising*) : Thank you, Edmunds. I don't know what I should do without you.

EDMUNDS : That's where it is, Miss Lilian : you'd forget yourself thinking about others.

LILIAN (*sits down at the table—dreamily*) : Perhaps I should. (*Pours out a cup of tea, hands it to EDMUNDS.*)

EDMUNDS (*deprecatingly*) : No, thank you, Miss Lilian. I know my place.

LILIAN (*with the flicker of a smile*) : Your place is to obey me, unless you, too, have turned rebel.

EDMUNDS : The Lord forbid ! No, Miss Lilian, I'd drink twenty cups of tea with the King himself to stop you thinking so bad of me as that.

(EDMUNDS takes the cup of tea and a sandwich, and retires into the background while he is eating and drinking. LILIAN sips her tea.)

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LILIAN (*thoughtfully*): How is the wounded man this evening, Edmunds?

EDMUNDS: He's a lot better than he ought to be. Men like him, Miss Lilian, don't die for a little thing like a bullet. It's funny—he seems grateful, in a way, for what I've done for him—not the shooting I don't mean, but the food and a few trifles like that.

LILIAN: You don't bear any malice then?

EDMUNDS: No, miss—and I don't exactly love him, that's the truth. But, you see, I was brought up in the Army, and once a man is down, we shake hands, in a manner of speaking, and help him up.

LILIAN: Aren't you glad you didn't kill him?

EDMUNDS: To tell the truth, I was sort of sorry the way I bungled it. But, there, I was afraid to hit you, and my hand shook, and I don't wonder I only scored a outer. If it had only been a lance, now, I'd have had him right enough.

(*There is the sound of quick, heavy footsteps approaching off, L. LILIAN glances nervously towards the door, rises quickly.*)

LILIAN: Quick, Edmunds—bolt the door.

(EDMUNDS *shambles towards the door, L., but before he reaches it it is thrown open, and JOHN ROBERTS strides into the room, followed by his body guard, who halt just inside the door.*)

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JOHN ROBERTS : So ! You are still here, Citizeness. Where is the Citizen Commander ? (LILIAN *remains silent.*) Answer me ! You know where he is. I can read it in your face.

LILIAN : Perhaps you can read the answer to your question in my face ?

JOHN ROBERTS : Don't bandy words with me. I ask you where he is, and it will be better for you to tell me.

LILIAN : I am not going to speak to your order. I claim the personal independence you have given to the people.

JOHN ROBERTS : A rebel has no civil rights. Your life is forfeit. The provocation you have already given me should make you go down on your knees and ask for mercy, and not defy me. Isn't it enough that you have betrayed my son and driven him to his death ?

LILIAN (*bewildered*) : Betrayed your son ? I—I don't understand you.

JOHN ROBERTS (*fiercely*) : Then I'll make you understand. You used your beauty to entice him here, to play upon his feelings, and make a traitor of him. His death lies at your door.

LILIAN (*reeling under the accusation—rallying all her strength*) : It is untrue—wickedly untrue. You, not I, condemned him to death. He was a brave and honourable gentleman, and I shall carry

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with me to the end a happy memory of (*falters*) our—our friendship. Do with me as you will. I—I—am—tired. (*She droops and grasps the back of a chair for support.*)

JOHN ROBERTS: By Heaven! this is too much. You gloss over your evil work with the skill of an actress.

(*There's a clatter and a shout off, L.* JOHN ROBERTS crosses swiftly to the door, throws it open, listens.)

A VOICE (*off, L.*): We have found the Citizen Commander. He's wounded, with a bullet in his shoulder.

JOHN ROBERTS: Look after him. I will see him directly. (*Crosses to LILIAN—with a cruel laugh.*) It seems I have stumbled upon a shambles. Which of you shot him? (*Looks down at the carpet—points.*) The blood-stains there accuse you.

LILIAN (*in a low voice*): It was done in self-defence.

JOHN ROBERTS: Ah! it was you—you confess it.

LILIAN: I did what any woman would have done in defence of her honour. You sent that man here to degrade me. I had no one to defend me. I defended myself.

EDMUNDS (*chafing and trying to speak during LILIAN'S confession—bursts out*): Miss Lilian! I—I—no, you mustn't stop me—

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LILIAN : Silence, Edmunds.

(EDMUNDS *wrings his hands, and is restlessly silent.*)

JOHN ROBERTS : Guards ! Take this woman to the cells.

(*The Guards advance towards LILIAN.*)

EDMUNDS (*bursts out*) : I will speak ! (LILIAN *tries to stop him.*) It's no use, Miss Lilian, I'll tell the truth. It was I that shot him (*shows revolver*) with this.

JOHN ROBERTS (*waves the Guards back*) : Oh, it was you who shot him, at your mistress's order. Give me that thing.

EDMUNDS (*reluctantly hands revolver to JOHN ROBERTS*) : I am guilty, and nobody else. I wasn't going to stand by and see Miss Lilian struggling with that blackguard. I'm proud of what I done, and I'd do it again.

JOHN ROBERTS : You won't have the chance. (*To the Guards.*) Take this old man out and hang him on the tree in front of the window, where his mistress can see him.

EDMUNDS : It's all right, Miss Lilian. Don't trouble about me. An old Lancer is always ready for the trumpet call. (*The Guards are leading EDMUNDS out. He looks back over his shoulder.*) Don't you blame Miss Lilian. It was the Unseen Hand that told me to shoot the Commander, and I did it.

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JOHN ROBERTS : You lie ! He is dead. (*To the Guards—EDMUNDS is excited, struggling to speak.*) Away with him !

(*EDMUNDS is led out, smiling bravely as he turns to LILIAN at the door to salute.*)

LILIAN (*on her knees before JOHN ROBERTS*) : Mercy ! Your son is not dead.

JOHN ROBERTS (*with a startled, sombre frown, fixes his eyes upon LILIAN, and then glances at the revolver in his hand*) : You lie. You cannot let the dead rest in peace. You would stain his memory with the responsibility for that old man's crime. The cup of your sins against the Revolution is filled to overflowing. You must die. (*Slowly he raises the weapon, points it at LILIAN, who, pale as death, lifts her eyes to his with a steady, unquailing gaze.*) If you have anything to say, say it quickly.

LILIAN (*brokenly*) : I have told you the truth. (*A pause.*) One favour I would ask you. Tell Rowland—I died—with his name—on my lips. (*She falters.*) Oh, Rowland—Rowland—my love for you has cost me my life.

JOHN ROBERTS : Your love for him ? (*With a bitter laugh.*) You must be crazy or think me a fool to believe such stuff as that. You, a daughter of the aristocracy, love a son of the people ! (*With a cruel smile.*) Bah ! it takes a high-bred wench

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like you to stoop to such a trick to save your life. Where is your boasted pride, where is your blue blood now? Your high birth cannot snatch you from the hand of justice.

LILIAN (*lost in her own thoughts—faintly*) : Yes—he is alive. He will tell you when you meet him that I—no—it was my old servant who saved him. (*Pauses—her thoughts trailing off into low murmurs.*) Yes—Edmunds remembered the secret way. The executioners came too late. Rowland had escaped.

JOHN ROBERTS (*staggered by the simplicity and pathos of her manner, gazes at her with a piercing, searching glance, his features working strangely*) : In God's name ! tell me the truth. Is my son alive ?

LILIAN (*puts her hand to her forehead—nods slowly*) : Yes—Edmunds saved him. (*She sinks down—over-wrought.*)

(*The revolver drops from JOHN ROBERTS'S hand. With a strangled cry he turns from her and rushes out of the room, L. Beyond the window the two Guards lead EDMUNDS towards the tree where he is to be executed. They halt under the tree, fix a rope round the old man's neck, and throw the other end of it over a projecting branch. They begin to haul upon the rope. JOHN ROBERTS rushes towards them, shouting and motioning to them to stop. They let go the rope and wait. JOHN ROBERTS removes the rope from EDMUNDS'S neck, and, ordering*

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his men to support the old man, they all move slowly out of sight.

LILIAN moves and looks round in a dazed way, then suddenly seems to remember. She staggers to her feet and crosses with difficulty to the window, anxious to know what has become of EDMUNDS, yet fearing to look out. At last she compels herself to raise her head. At this moment she is startled by a dull thud, as of a body falling against the door, L.)

LILIAN : What's that ?

EDMUNDS (*outside—feebly*) : It's only Edmunds, Miss Lilian.

LILIAN : Edmunds !

(*She crosses to the door as quickly as she can, opens it, and EDMUNDS stumbles in and sinks into the nearest chair. LILIAN fetches a glass of wine from the sideboard and holds it to his lips. In a few moments he begins to revive.*)

EDMUNDS (*trying to smile*) : It was a close thing that time, Miss Lilian.

LILIAN : I never thought to see you again.

EDMUNDS (*speaking slowly with difficulty*) : Seems to me, Miss Lilian, that I'm a bit of a fraud. Just as I was going up and giving up, as you may say, there was a shout, and the gentlemen of the rope let it go, and down I came. It's wonderful what a difference a few minutes will make sometimes.

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LILIAN : But who were they—what made them let you go ?

EDMUNDS : The President—so far as I can make out. He came along like a thunderstorm, and here I am. I found this five-pound note in my hand (*shows a five-pound note.*) So I knew I wasn't dead. £5 damages, I call it. It's funny, to take your life one minute and give you £5 to help you to live the next.

LILIAN : Oh, Edmunds, you don't know how good it is to see you again.

EDMUNDS : And this is good wine, too, Miss Lilian. "Forty-eight," I shouldn't wonder. I am feeling like a lion again. (*Sits up—feels his neck.*)

LILIAN : You must have another glass (*fetching another glass from the sideboard*).

EDMUNDS : Well, I suppose it might be called an exceptional occasion. A man doesn't get hanged every day. Perhaps one more glass won't do any harm under the circumstances. (*Drinks wine.*) They say Port wine is good for a sore throat.

LILIAN : Oh, Edmunds, how can you joke at such a time as this !

EDMUNDS : That's just it, Miss Lilian—a joke isn't half a joke if it doesn't come at a black time, to help to drive away care.

(*There is a sound of distant firing.*)

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LILIAN : Hark !

EDMUNDS (*struggling to his feet*) : They are fighting, sure enough.

LILIAN (*listening*) : I heard it just now. It sounds nearer.

EDMUNDS : Yes, Miss Lilian, the sound is travelling this way. There'll be sharp fighting about Manor Glyn—thank God ! (*Hobbling to window.*) I shouldn't wonder if we don't smell the powder if we open the window a bit (*raises his hand to open the window*).

LILIAN (*following EDMUNDS*) : No—don't do that.

EDMUNDS : Law, Miss Lilian, you disappoint me, it's the best bouquet in nature. You try it, miss ; it's better than smelling salts ; it'll send you up to the top of your form in no time.

(*There is a sharp smattering of machine--gun fire appreciably nearer.*)

EDMUNDS (*smiles all over his face*) : It's coming, Miss Lilian, it's coming. I'm thankful I've been spared to see it.

LILIAN : Oh, Edmunds, if our friends should be defeated !

EDMUNDS : What ! them defeated—and the old Lancers on the job ? Not much, Miss Lilian, don't you think it ! (*Proudly.*) The Lancers are never defeated. They may retreat, just to give

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the enemy a lesson in tactics. But just wait a minute 'till the enemy treads on their tail, and then the band plays. You don't mind my talk, if you please, Miss Lilian? I'm thinking it is better to talk than to think when your mind is on the jump, and you can't fight.

(LILIAN is not listening. She is straining her eyes into the distance, absorbed in the battle scene developing outside.)

Groups of Revolutionary Guards stream across the grounds in front of the window. Some of them take cover behind shrubs and bushes, and fire rapidly. Some fall and lie still in death; others struggle away wounded; others again cross and recross the grounds, shouting and cheering, and now JOHN ROBERTS, the lust of battle shining in his eyes, crosses swiftly, shouting words of command and pointing ahead with his sword. The Guards near him spring to their feet with a cheer, and follow him at a run. The confusing din of battle increases. In a little while JOHN ROBERTS and the Revolutionary Guards are pressed slowly back, fighting as they retreat.)

LILIAN (watching at the window—turns away, pale and trembling, covers her eyes with her hand): Close the shutters, Edmunds. I can't bear to see it.

EDMUNDS (reluctantly closing shutters, but keeping a chink big enough to peep through): The rabble's giving ground, Miss Lilian. It's no good

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for them to face the old regiment. Revolutionary scum! They don't like the lance when it looks at them from the point. (*A great cheer goes up outside, followed by "Down with the Revolutionaries!"*) EDMUNDS *opens shutter a little wider, shows great excitement.*) Gosh! Oh, by gosh! Miss Lilian, they are flying full-pelt! And there is Sir Charles, and the Unseen Hand, and Colonel Cradoc after them like the wind, and hundreds more charging like fury. Well done, boys! Shoulder to shoulder—keep them on the run. My gosh! they are scattering them like birds in a storm. (*With a satisfied sigh.*) It is like the old days in India. (*Laughs feebly—overcome with excitement.*)

LILIAN: Oh, Edmunds, how warlike you are. You must have been terrible when you were young.

EDMUNDS: No, miss—that is, I can't very well recollect. You see, the old General didn't like slackers, so I suppose I was a bit of a terror, unawares, as one might say, when he was looking on. Ah, Miss Lilian, the sight of the old uniform does make the blood sing in one's ears and make one sorry for one's old age. It's grand to see our gentry and country boys driving the rabble of the towns to H—— Heaven!

LILIAN: Let me look out—I must see!

EDMUNDS: It's in the blood, Miss Lilian. (*Makes way for her.*)

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LILIAN (*looks out—holding her breath*) : Who's that—on the ground (*points*) there—that big man? I can't see. My eyes (*dashes her hand across her eyes*).

EDMUNDS (*looking out*) : It's—it's—yes—I see his face—it's the President.

LILIAN (*in a hushed voice*) : Rowland's father! He is very still. Is he dead?

EDMUNDS : No, Miss Lilian—he is moving. See! Some of his Guards are lifting him on to a hurdle.

LILIAN : They won't bring him here, will they, Edmunds?

EDMUNDS : I shouldn't wonder if they do. It's the nearest place.

LILIAN : Poor man!

EDMUNDS : Look here, Miss Lilian. If I have got to do anything for him, I—I'll finish him.

LILIAN : Hush! If he is wounded, we must try to forget who he is, and remember only that he's in need of help. You wouldn't leave an enemy stricken down in battle to die, would you?

EDMUNDS : But he was an enemy before the battle began, Miss Lilian. But there—he gave me £5 to pay off old scores.

LILIAN : Hush! I can hear them coming.

EDMUNDS : Why, you are trembling all over.

LILIAN : It is the thought of meeting him again.

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EDMUNDS : You leave it to me, Miss Lilian. I'll do very well with him. You go to your room, if you please.

LILIAN (*agitated*) : I think I will (*going*). If I can be of any use, you will come for me ?

EDMUNDS : Yes, Miss Lilian, I will.

(LILIAN goes out, R. EDMUNDS throws open door, L., and waits. The measured tramp of feet draws nearer, and JOHN ROBERTS is borne into the room on a hurdle and lowered gently on to the floor. He is ghastly pale, and his eyes are fixed in a vacant, unseeing stare. One of the bearers gives him a little stimulant from a flask, and then crosses to EDMUNDS.)

BEARER (*in a low voice*) : He's booked. Give him a sip now and then to cool his mouth. You can afford to be merciful. You've won—we have lost. (*With a long, wistful gaze at the dying man.*) Poor John ! God help him ! he had his faults. You'll look after him ?

EDMUNDS : Yes. The devil himself would be looked after if he fell into Miss Lilian's hands.

JOHN ROBERTS (*a little revived*) : Leave me—the Revolution—wants you—fight—fight on !

(*The bearers bow their heads and march out solemnly, turning to salute at the door. EDMUNDS closes the door after them, and then comes back slowly to JOHN ROBERTS.*)

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JOHN ROBERTS (*his eyes fixed waveringly on EDMUNDS*): Old man—she lied to me—my son is dead. (*Falls off into half-conscious muttering.*)

EDMUNDS (*shaking his head*): I don't believe he knows what he is saying.

JOHN ROBERTS: Water—water!

(EDMUNDS *hobbles to the sideboard—returns with a glass of water—supports JOHN ROBERTS'S head and holds water to his lips.*)

JOHN ROBERTS (*feebly*): Thank you, friend. (*Closes his eyes in forgetfulness.*)

EDMUNDS: He's sleeping. To think I was saved for a job like this! (*Shakes his head doubtfully.*) There's no knowing what you'll come to.

JOHN ROBERTS (*starting up—deliriously*): Rowland! (*Quiet for a moment.*) Don't blame me, Margaret—don't blame me! I didn't know. (*Makes an attempt to rise. Wildly.*) No—no—(*puts his hand before his eyes to shut out a vision*)—don't curse me. It was a mistake—I swear it! (*Falls back exhausted.*)

(EDMUNDS *looks on very troubled. There is knocking near the clock. EDMUNDS turns sharply, listens for a moment. The knocking is repeated—he crosses to the clock—hastily presses the spring in the floor—the clock revolves—and ROWLAND, unmasked, with the flush and hurry of battle upon him, steps into the room.*)

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ROWLAND (*anxiously*) : My father ? I heard he was lying here wounded. How is he ?

EDMUNDS : He's dying, Mr. Rowland.

ROWLAND : Is it as bad as that ? The surgeon gave me little hope.

EDMUNDS (*nods gravely*) : Shall I fetch Miss Lilian ?

ROWLAND : Yes—no. You may tell her I am here.

EDMUNDS : Yes, sir. (*Exit, R.*)

(ROWLAND *crosses swiftly to the litter, and, deeply moved, looks down at his father. JOHN ROBERTS lies still. His eyes presently open, and fix themselves upon ROWLAND in a dazed, wandering way.*)

JOHN ROBERTS (*tremulously*) : Have you come to curse me ?

ROWLAND (*gently*) : I have come to help you. (*Silence.*) Father ! don't you know me ?

JOHN ROBERTS (*after lying still for some moments, suddenly smiles up at ROWLAND*) : Go and fetch your mother, Rowland.

ROWLAND : Mother ? You forget—she is dead.

JOHN ROBERTS (*staring into space—calls eagerly*) : Margaret—Margaret !

ROWLAND : Father—for pity's sake—don't. She—is not here.

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JOHN ROBERTS (*puzzled—his strength fast ebbing away*): Dead! Rowland—Margaret—both dead?

(*LILIAN comes in, R., and slowly approaches the dying man.*)

JOHN ROBERTS (*turns towards LILIAN with half-seeing eyes and, with a last effort, holds out trembling hands*): Margaret—Margaret! I knew you would come! (*His hands drop limply to his sides, and he sinks back upon his litter, dead.*)

(*ROWLAND looks down at the pale, still face with infinite pity. Silently LILIAN crosses to his side and puts her hand into his.*)

ROWLAND: His faults die with him. Can you forgive him?

(*LILIAN bows her head. Her head droops until it rests upon ROWLAND'S shoulder. The stillness is broken by her brother, SIR CHARLES, who leaps in through the window, followed by TOM and SAM.*)

SIR CHARLES: The day is ours!

SIR CHARLES }

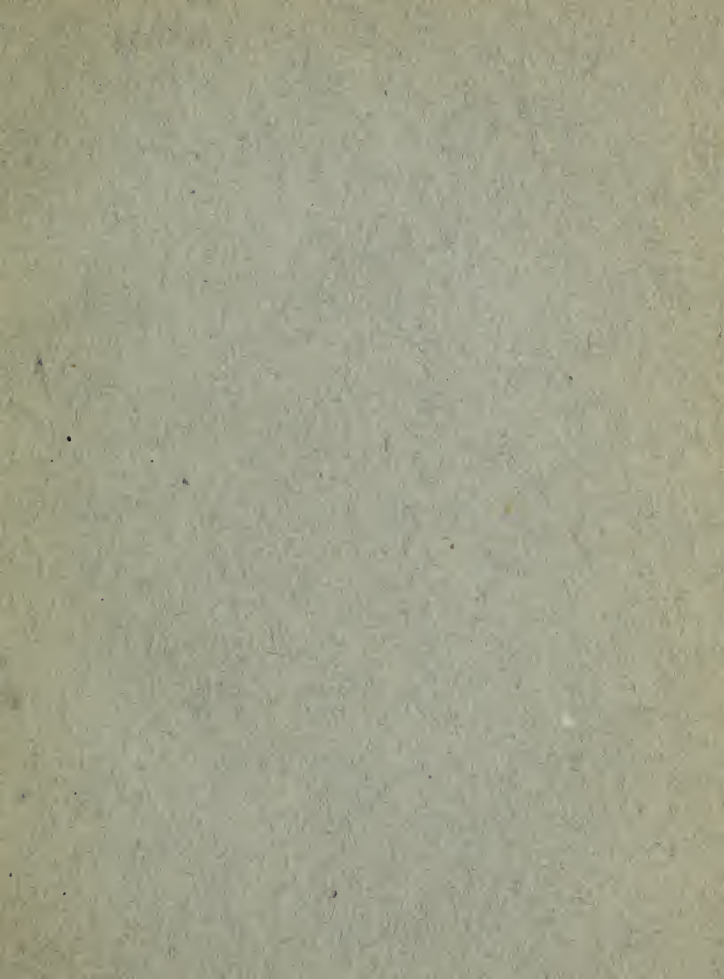
TOM

SAM

} : Long live the King!

(*LILIAN turns towards her brother and points to the dead President. SIR CHARLES, TOM, and SAM stare down at the body, and uncover their heads reverently.*)

CURTAIN.





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PLAYS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THREE or FOUR ACTS.

- *The Human Factor.
- *The Schemer.
- *The Second Son.
Daughters of Eve.
- *The Great Experiment.
- *The Arrogance of Power.
- *The Crash.
Foiled (*for Amateurs*).

ONE ACT.

- *The Village Wizard.
A Near Thing.
- *The Conversion.
- *The Epidemic.
- *A Monologue for Me.
The Girl from Cardiff.
The Counter Stroke.
A Pair of Bracelets.

By NAUNTON DAVIES, in collaboration with
LEON M. LION.

- The Cobweb. (Four acts.)
- The Wanton. (One act.)
- Red Luck. (One act.)

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